

Commentary

Volume Fifty-five, Number Two, February 1973

Higher Education for All?

THE CASE OF OPEN ADMISSIONS

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Fashions in Anti-Semitism

Milton Himmelfarb

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Public Experience**

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Disease as a Way of Life

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An Exchange on Equality

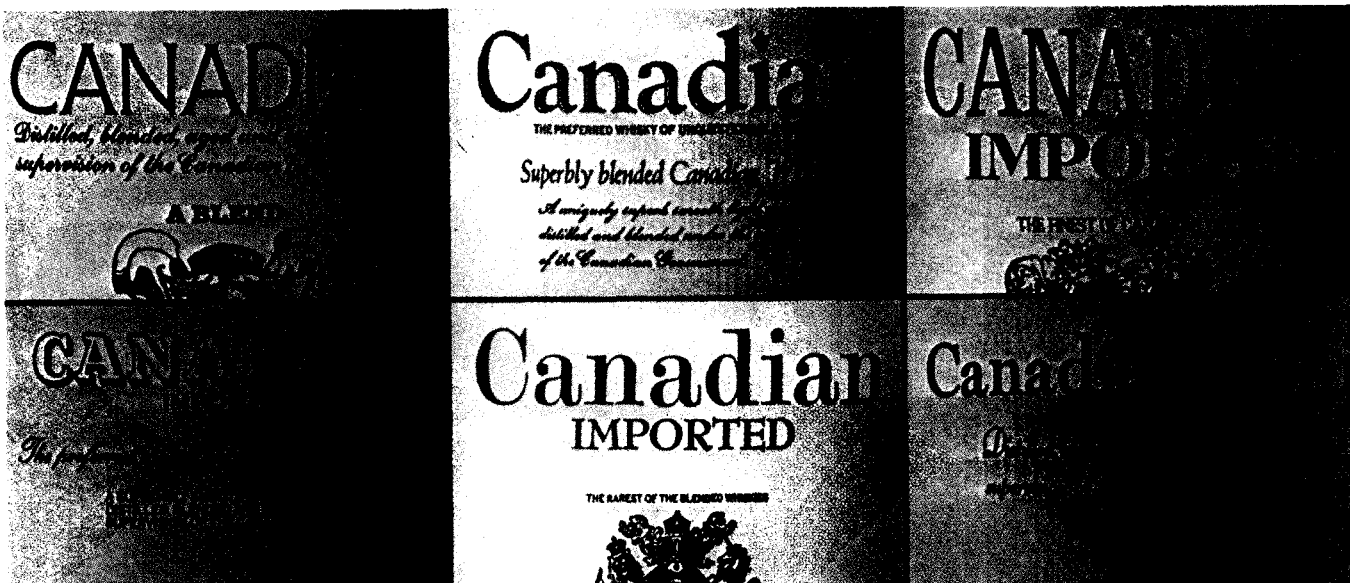
Irving Kristol and Critics

Books in Review:

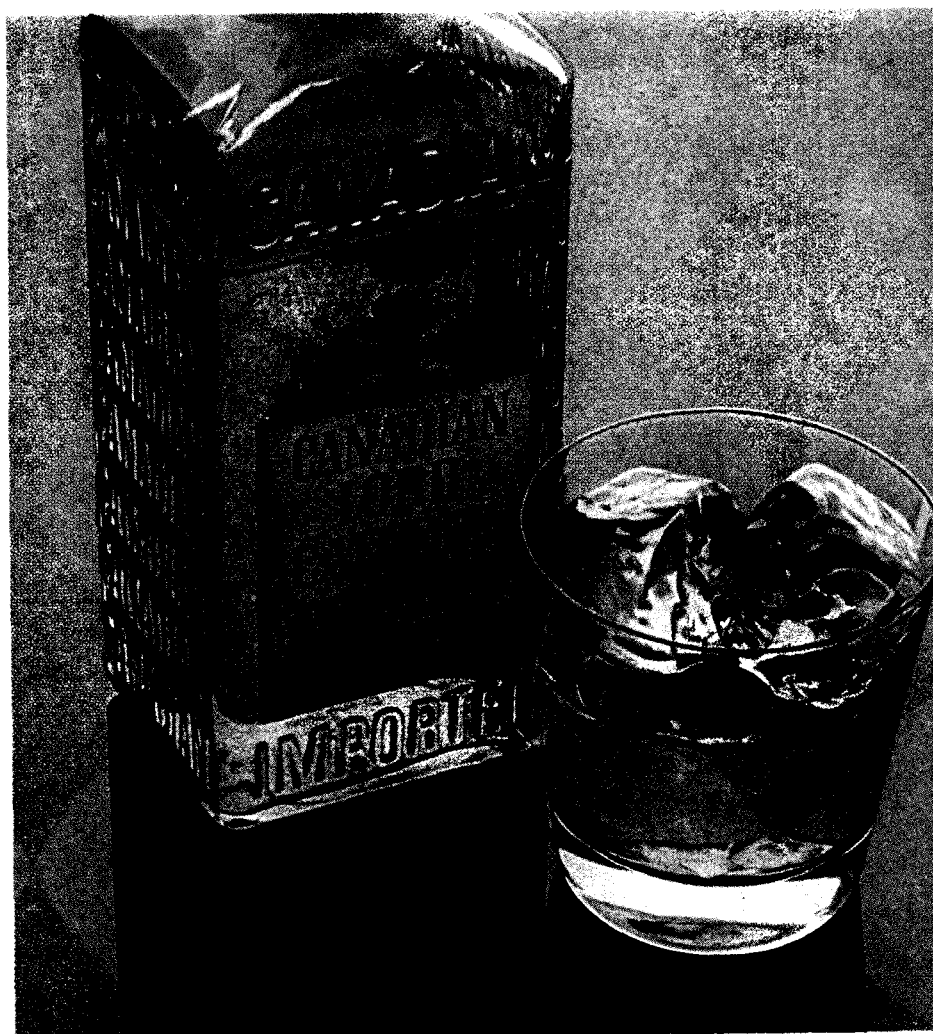
Diane Ravitch/Andrew M. Greeley/Marvin Fox/Sara Sanborn/David Thorburn

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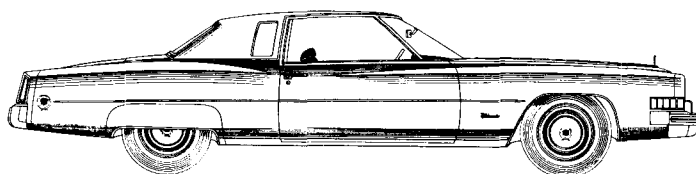
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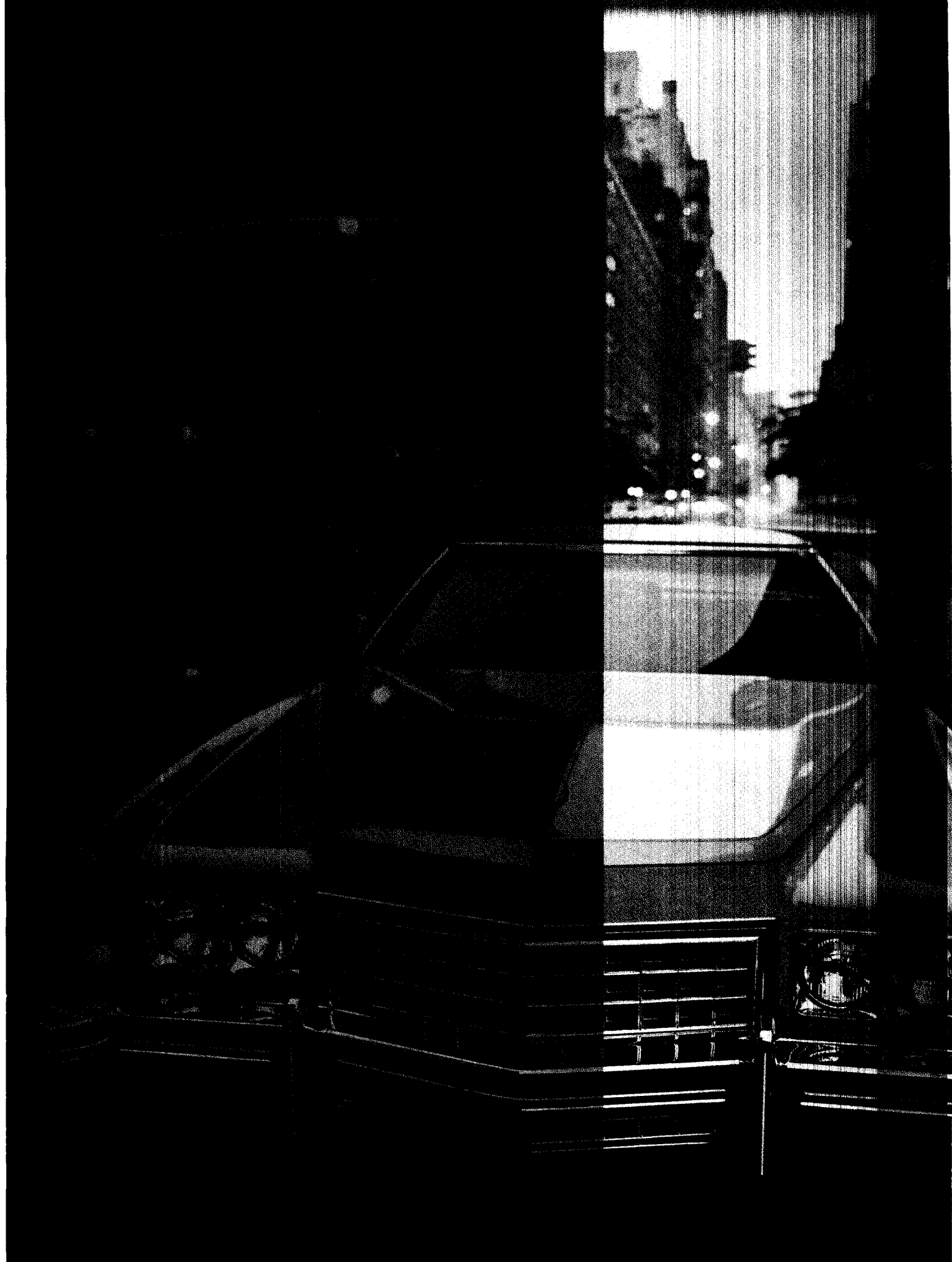
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Commentary

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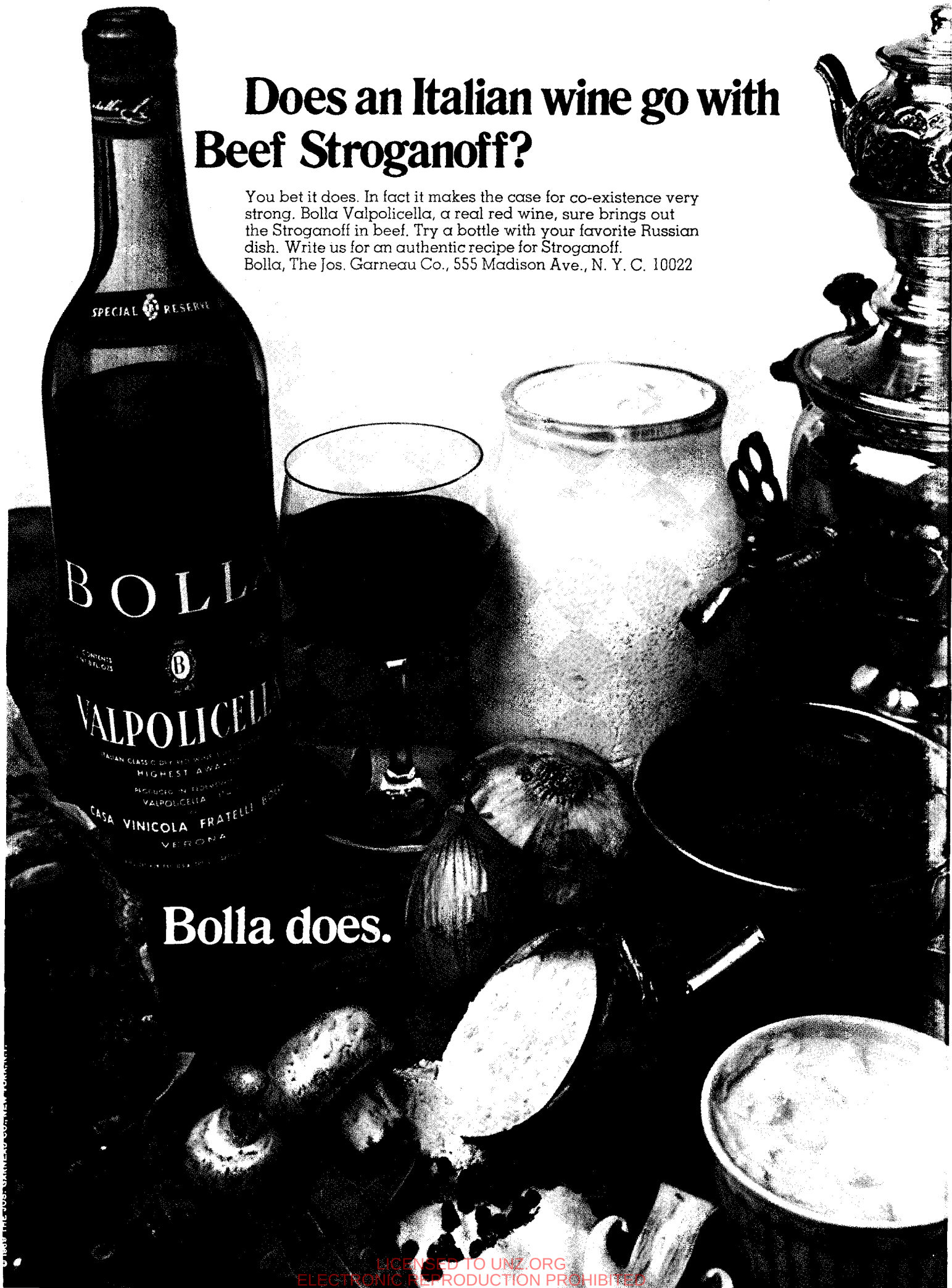
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**ETHIOPIAN
AIRLINES**

The Key to the Hidden Empire

The Intellectuals & the Pursuit of Happiness

Norman Podhoretz

I WAS, I must admit, surprised both by the volume and by the intensity of the response (p. 12) to Irving Kristol's article "About Equality" which appeared in our November 1972 number. Of course, Mr. Kristol is a provocative writer, especially when he turns his polemical attention to "the familiar issues of current political controversy." In this case, however, he tried, as he says, to set his theme "into a larger historical and philosophical framework" than such issues in themselves can supply. As it happens, whatever penalties or rewards an effort of this kind may bring to a writer, letters to the editor are not generally among them. Why then should Mr. Kristol's article have drawn as much fire as it did?

The main reason, it appears, is connected with Mr. Kristol's contention that no one except the intellectuals cares about equality and that even for the intellectuals equality is only a "surrogate" for other issues touching on the fundamental nature of bourgeois society itself. Now I myself am of two minds as to whether and to what extent the manifest passion of so many intellectuals over the issue of equality should be taken at face value. But whether Mr. Kristol is right or wrong about the intellectuals, there can, it seems to me, be no doubt that very little resentment exists anywhere else in this country over discrepancies of wealth and condition.

In saying this, I do not mean to say that there is no concern over poverty. Lately, in the aftermath of the McGovern debacle, we have been hearing talk about the growth of what Irving Howe calls a new "social meanness" in America. But the truth is that in spite of

such worries regarding the incentive to work as are mentioned by several of Mr. Kristol's critics, more and more Americans are coming to accept the idea that everyone is entitled to a basic minimum of income; and in spite of such doubts as are raised by Eric J. Cassell (p. 80) in his analysis of the relation between disease and social patterns, more and more Americans are coming to accept the idea that everyone is entitled to proper medical care as a matter of right.*

Yet even if all this were enacted—if, that is, poverty were in some sense abolished—there would still be inequalities in the distribution of income, there would still be great concentrations of wealth at the top, and we would still be left with the rich. Over these conditions, however, there is scarcely any concern to speak of in the United States at all. To be sure, more and more people are coming to resent the fact that the rich often pay less than their fair share of taxes. But it is a curious feature of contemporary life in America that hardly anyone resents the fact that the rich exist. Even radicals spend more time nowadays attacking the middle class than attacking the rich, and when the big corporations are criticized, the indictment is less

*There is hard evidence to confirm these impressions and to contravene the thesis of a growing "social meanness" in America. Thus, according to recent findings by both Gallup and Harris, over 40 per cent of the American people now support some form of guaranteed income, while well over 60 per cent now favor increased federal spending "to help the poor" by improving the education of their children, by subsidizing day-care centers for the children of working mothers, and by making it possible for families who can't afford it to send their children to college (the *Washington Post*, January 8, 1973).

likely to center on their enormous wealth than on the political influence they command or the pollution their activities cause. (An important element in the otherwise puzzling enthusiasm of the Left for the ecology movement—puzzling because conservationism has in the past appealed almost exclusively to conservatives—is, I would guess, that it has created a substitute line of attack on the corporations and a new argument for controlling them in the absence of any significant popular feeling against their strictly economic power.)

IN SHORT, outside of certain intellectual circles, it would be hard to find anyone in this country who believes, or at least professes to believe, in equality of condition as a desirable social goal. Christopher Jencks and his colleagues may want a society in which, as Diane Ravitch (p. 86) paraphrases it in her review of *Inequality*, "everyone ends up with approximately the same rewards." But Jencks himself recognizes that this is not the society most Americans want. Nor, it should be added, is it the society envisaged by traditional American values. Nowadays every sign of unhappiness the country has to show is paraded before us as proof that the American Dream has been "betrayed" or "turned into a nightmare." Yet the American Dream has never been a dream of utopia. What traditional American values guarantee is not the right to achieve happiness, but the right to pursue it.

In other words, if equality of condition is neither a traditional American ideal nor a contemporary one in the sense of enjoying widespread popular assent, equality of opportunity emphatically is such an ideal. A chance for every individual to better himself by means of his own exertions is precisely what the American Dream has always meant, and it is what the American people today almost universally support in principle and

to an ever growing extent in practice through measures like Open Admissions—again in spite of such doubts as are expressed by Martin Mayer (p. 37) in his account of how this program has been working in the City University of New York.

Here too, the one major exception is among the intellectuals—in part because of the hostility to bourgeois society Mr. Kristol discusses in "About Equality," but also, I suspect, because some intellectuals have secretly come to despair in recent years of the ability of American blacks to better themselves economically even if discrimination is eliminated. No matter that the progressive removal of barriers against the blacks has actually resulted in spectacular gains. No matter that, for example, by 1969 the median income of young black families had roughly reached parity with that of white families of similar age and composition. No matter that by 1970 young black graduates of City College in New York were earning more money

than their white counterparts and that more of them were employed in management and the professions.* The fact that in many other categories blacks continue to lag behind seems to have persuaded some intellectuals that equal opportunity is not enough and that—as Edward T. Chase (p. 12) for one asserts in his letter on Mr. Kristol—quotas, preferential hiring, and other forms of reverse discrimination are necessary if conditions are ever to improve.

QUITE apart from the insult to blacks inescapably implicit in devices like these, they also violate

* However much intellectuals, black and white, may ignore the progress blacks have made, two-thirds of the American people, and an even larger percentage of blacks, are aware of them, according to the same Gallup and Harris surveys cited above. In consequence, they do not believe that increased spending specifically designed to help the blacks is necessary any longer—although, as already indicated, they do support increased federal spending "to help the poor" in general.

traditional American ideals and contemporary American sentiments alike (not to mention the law). Consequently Mr. Chase and all who share in his point of view have been forced to argue that quotas and the rest are consistent with equal opportunity and are even indispensable to the realization of that ideal. This, in my opinion, is a bit like saying that Christianity is the "fulfillment" of Judaism, and indeed those who say it often remind one of early Christian apologists struggling to prove that the New Testament is foreshadowed in and continuous with the Old. So long as this sophistical project goes on in the matter of equal opportunity, it will serve to generate historical and philosophical confusion and it will be hampered by historical and philosophical clarity. On reflection, then, there is really nothing very surprising in the fact that Mr. Kristol's effort to achieve such clarity should have drawn as much fire as it did. ■

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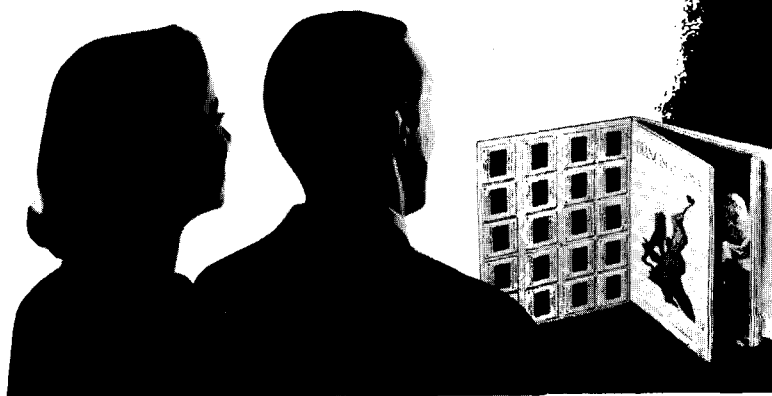
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Letters from Readers

Equality and Justice

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I'm afraid Irving Kristol's irrefutable diagnosis of bourgeois society's spiritual impoverishment ["About Equality," November 1972] is blurred by his own spirit of "benign neglect." If our society's "problem is far beyond the competence of politics to cope with," then of course there's no use fussing about inequality. But a bourgeois society, American society, did try quite ambitiously to cope with inequality during, roughly, the period of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, though people easily forget this. And there was a time, rather recently, when Mr. Kristol himself seemed not far from John Rawls's philosophy of compensatory social action which he now finds so confounding. In a symposium in 1960 Mr. Kristol said: "What seems necessary now, if we are to be governed as a democracy in some spirit of equality, is unequal opportunity. In other words, the disadvantaged groups do not need to be given less chance than anyone else, they need to be given far more opportunity than anyone else. This requires government action. They will be accorded privileges under the name of equality for all."

What's more, though Mr. Kristol ridicules the academics for their envy-charged criticisms of the businessman and his ethos, and suggests that Rawls's position (Rawls's idea is "to redress the bias of contingencies in the direction of equality") is unprecedented heresy, the fact is that Mr. Kristol in a major essay only last year put down the very argument he now seems to espouse. In an essay on "Capitalism Today" Mr. Kristol disputed Friedrich von Hayek's defense of the free market as being necessarily unconcerned with inequality and justice. Mr. Kristol wrote: "But can men live in a free society if they have no reason to believe it is also a just society? I do not think so. My reading of history is that, in the same way as men cannot for long tolerate a sense of spiritual meaninglessness in their individual lives, so they cannot for long ac-

cept a society in which power, privilege, and property are not distributed according to some morally meaningful criteria." And again, in the same essay: "So I conclude, despite Professor Hayek's ingenious analysis, that men cannot accept the historical accidents of the marketplace—seen merely as accidents—as the basis for an enduring and legitimate entitlement to power, privilege, and property."

It is fashionable now to denigrate the political efforts toward equality in the 60's because the results of compensatory programs were mixed or programs fizzled out with the advent of Nixon, but in fact significant positions and significant actions were taken, chiefly under the prod of the civil-rights movement. Quotas for non-whites both in employment and in housing, public and private, were called for by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights back in the 60's. For a decade there was widespread verbal support for the Urban League's demand for preferential hiring of blacks, to redress 350 years of discrimination. These positions weren't really very revolutionary. Consider the treatment of veterans in civil-service hiring, where "merit" testing was modified by allowing the veterans 10 points. And, in insurance, states now have "second-injury funds." Here the bias is to favor the handicapped . . . by arbitrarily reducing compensation-insurance costs. Through the "second-injury fund," to which all state employees contribute, a pool is created to pay for the costs of total disability if an already handicapped employee sustains a second on-the-job injury. . . .

Efforts to reduce inequality slackened off notably at the end of the 60's. For example, the income of the black population rose from 51 to 62 per cent of white earnings from 1963 to 1967, but then the advance halted.

In 1953, the civil-rights expert Lawrence Bloomgarden, writing in COMMENTARY, showed in detail how medical schools used quotas to restrict Jews. Liberals with the best of intentions easily embraced the comfortable notion that quotas



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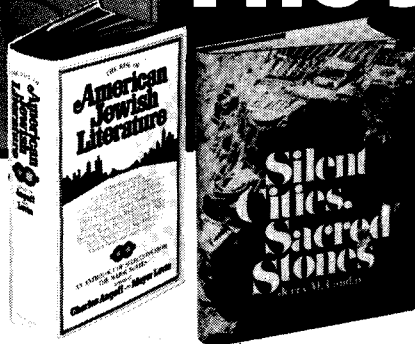
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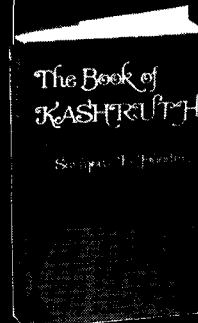
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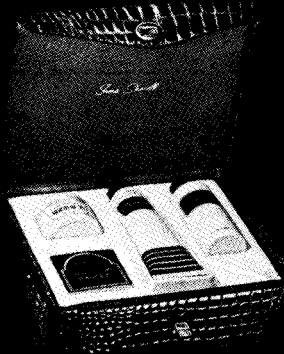
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and preferential hiring were bad *per se* and un-American. At that time Bloomgarden concluded bitterly that a quota policy is "never used to justify expansion of opportunity for minority groups, but only for limitation. It is never said, for example, that Negro medical students should constitute 10 per cent of the total to correspond to the Negro percentage of our population."

The "lack of meaning" in the lives of those nasty types whom Mr. Kristol deplores, who press for greater equality, may have more complex sources than he suggests; and one source is the dismaying prospect of manifest inequalities around them everywhere that only political action can, and must, redress.

EDWARD T. CHASE

The New American Library
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol has written an insightful essay on why intellectuals tend to find modern society insufficiently inspiring of higher purposes. But in titling the essay "About Equality," and singling out concern with social and economic inequality as an example of the "gnostic and millenarian movements" which intellectual restlessness produces, Mr. Kristol has struck below the belt. He may be "persuaded that though those people talk most earnestly about equality, it is not really equality that interests them." This may be true for some of the millenarians or Maoists he talks about. But what of the mass working-class movements of Western Europe, or the mainstream of the Democratic party? These are not primarily intellectual movements. What about American social democrats who emphasized the issue of economic inequality throughout the 60's, while rejecting revolutionary millenarianism?

I would suggest that there are a large number of normal, practical reasons why people, and not just intellectuals, can be concerned about inequality:

1) Inequality hurts the chances for self-development and the pursuit of happiness—in the simple, "bourgeois" sense of "a better life"—of those at the lower end of the social scale. As Seymour Martin Lipset has written: inequality "is basically punitive and discriminatory. The lower strata in all so-

cieties are punished psychically and often physically for being in an inferior position. They and their children have less of an opportunity to achieve the advantages available in the society than those of equal ability who enter the system at a higher class level. Stratification advantages or disadvantages cumulate in a self-supporting cycle."

2) Although it is of course not true that the entire wealth of the community is locked up with "the rich," neither is it true that the amount of income which could potentially be raised by redistributive taxation is piddling, as Mr. Kristol implies. The 3.5 million American families making *over* \$30,000 currently control somewhat over \$200 billion dollars of America's gross national income. If, say, taxes were raised so that each of these families paid an extra \$1,000 in taxes, \$35 billion could be raised there. If one adds on \$20 billion of tax reform to this \$35 billion of tax increases, that's \$55 billion. Surely this could go some way, not toward utopia, but toward substantively improving the conditions of life for ordinary Americans.

3) Gratuitous inequality, as Mr. Kristol hints at on several occasions, increases social tensions and the potential for violence in a society, especially when the inequality is widely known and publicized. This applies not only to the very poorest members of society, but also to the increase in tension which occurs between the poorest and those in the "middle."

Mr. Kristol professes puzzlement as to why he has gotten no taker on his requests for an article in the *Public Interest* on the exact shape of the "ideal" distribution of income. The reason, I would suggest, is that such a theoretical model is impossible. The justification for inequality in society is the necessity to encourage achievement and innovation, and to reward differential effort. The justification for equality is, paradoxically, that all men are created unequal—that differential achievement and effort is to a significant measure due to factors beyond the individual's control, like heredity and early environment. Exactly balancing these two precepts to get an "ideal" income distribution would be very difficult—Mr. Kristol might have equal difficulty getting someone to come up with a theore-

tical model explaining exactly why what is should be. But I would suggest that if Mr. Kristol looked closely at American society, he could come up with many practical reasons why moves in the direction of greater income equality in the United States would be desirable.

STEVEN KELMAN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:
... "About Equality" makes a number of questionable assertions. I will confine myself to a brief discussion of those that deal with economics and economists, although I will match against Irving Kristol's Aristotle my Plato: "... in a society which is to be immune from the most fatal of disorders ... there must be no place for penury in any section of the population, nor yet for opulence ..." (*The Laws*).

Mr. Kristol has asked a number of economists to compose for him an article on the "proper" distribution of income; not only has he failed to get satisfaction from them so far, but he fears that such an article may never be written. Fortunately, it already has. He may be interested in an article by Ray C. Fair, "The Optimal Distribution of Income," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. LXXXV (1971).

Mr. Kristol asserts that "it is a demonstrable fact that in all modern, bourgeois societies, the distribution of income is [also] along a bell-shaped curve," the word "also" referring to a previous statement to the effect that human attributes have this bell-shaped distribution. ... Human attributes are frequently found to follow a "bell-shaped" distribution at least approximately. We can therefore infer that this is the distribution that Mr. Kristol has in mind. But it is a demonstrable fact that this distribution is not a good approximation of the distribution of incomes. One may argue whether this or that distribution provides a better fit to the distribution of incomes, and proponents of a log-normal hypothesis ... may do battle with the proponents of a Paretian hypothesis ... but neither of these distributions looks even remotely like the normal distribution. In fact, the distributions that fit the data are characterized by a small number of high incomes and a very large number of small incomes; not by a small number of high incomes and a small number

of small incomes, as Mr. Kristol would have us believe.

Finally, Mr. Kristol would have us believe that the income distribution of all Western nations is strikingly similar. Although one must recognize the relativity of judgments in this matter—one man's "strikingly similar" may well be another's "rather different"—it is interesting to observe the following Gini coefficients for pre-tax incomes reported in *Incomes in Postwar Europe: A Study of Policies, Growth and Distribution* (United Nations Economic Survey of Europe in 1965, Part 2): Norway (1963), 0.36; Sweden (1963), 0.40; France (1962), 0.52; and many others. Notwithstanding all the difficulties of measurement inherent in obtaining Gini coefficients for incomes after taxes and transfer payments, it is still relevant to point out that tax systems are not without an effect: in the U.S., which does not have a very progressive tax system, in 1950 pre- and post-tax Gini coefficients are reported to be 0.41 and 0.38 respectively (Irving Kravis, *The Structure of Income*, University of Pennsylvania, 1962).

If Mr. Kristol were right about these economic points, it would seem to follow that we might as well give up worrying about the inequality of incomes since (a) nobody knows how to come to grips with the question of the "proper" distribution of incomes, (b) the distribution of incomes only reflects the distribution of ability anyway, and (c) no government can do anything about it. It seems to me that if you can get three strikes you are out.

RICHARD E. QUANDT
Department of Economics
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In our opinion Irving Kristol misrepresents John Rawls's views on justice and equality as well as those of economists interested in explaining and altering current income distribution in the United States.

Mr. Kristol writes, "a distinguished Harvard professor, John Rawls, recently published a serious, massive, and widely-acclaimed work in political philosophy whose argument is that a social order is just and legitimate *only* to the degree that it is directed to the redress of inequality. ... The thesis itself is not considered contro-



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versial." In *A Theory of Justice* Rawls argues, however, that in constructing a social contract, liberty ought to be placed before equality, so that an increment in equality brought about by a sacrifice of liberty is unjustified. When liberty is not at issue, inequality is still justified if it is to the advantage of the least favored members of society. After sketching the ideal conception of a just society, Rawls does consider such topics as civil disobedience and the duty to comply with unjust laws, but his account of what is to be done about the redress of injustices identifiable by comparing any historical society to the ideal is not systematic. Mr. Rawls's book has ignited intense controversy among economists, most of whom appear skeptical not only about its methods, but also about its conclusions. Could Mr. Kristol's comments be directed toward a different book?

Mr. Kristol is distressed by the inability or unwillingness of social scientists to provide an answer to the question, "What is the proper shape of an income-distribution curve in a country like the United States?" First, one should realize that it is unfair to pose the question in this way. Substantial changes in the distribution of income will be accompanied by equally substantial changes in the structure of our society.

Because the nature of these drifts can hardly be predicted in advance, the problem of optimal income distribution is an entirely different matter from simply asking questions like, "How much should it be worth to society to have two families with incomes of \$15,000 instead of one with \$10,000 and one with \$20,000?" Mr. Kristol's formulation of the problem is like asking Columbus, in 1491, how much he would be willing to pay to discover the New World.

However, this is not to say that we agree with Mr. Kristol that the problem is fundamentally unsolvable, or that the issue of inequality is just a banner raised by "intellectuals" in their class struggle with the business community. (Who are these intellectuals anyway?) Farther still are we from the view that social science cannot contribute to constructive solutions. It is clear that the problem of income redistribution is bound up intimately with questions of incentives. If we try to use a more

progressive tax system, people with high earning potential may not work as much as before. If we have a guaranteed minimum income, people may not work at all—or then again they may. Each solution poses difficult—but not impossible—questions regarding how people will behave in situations in which we have not yet observed them. Mr. Kristol would perhaps be interested to know that careful, scientific research is being done on these incentive effects in several locations right now (by intellectuals).

The results will tell us what we can do—not what we should do. We can then proceed, not immediately to some hypothetical optimum, but in a generally agreed-upon direction, in such a way that we can see how well we like what changes are being wrought.

Mr. Kristol also neglects to mention that economic discrimination—especially in capital and labor markets—is crucial to any explanation of the existing income distribution. One economist, Lester Thurow of MIT, has estimated that the "sheer fact of being black explains 38 per cent of the difference in the incidence of poverty for whites and Negroes." Is it so hard to understand why economists favor more equality? Moreover, on the basis of relative income measures, there is little evidence that discrimination against disadvantaged groups has diminished over time. Economists are quick to point out that the existence of discrimination reduces the nation's total potential output, since it involves an inefficient use of resources. This is true even if whites gain individually or collectively from it, which is far from clear. When it comes to "equality of opportunity" economists are all for it, and for the same reasons that they favor free trade and open cartels. . . .

The bell-shaped curve of rewards is, no doubt, immutable—but bells come in all widths, and with effort and careful planning we should be able to find one that rings true.

ROBERT COOTER
JERRY GREEN
JANET YELLEN

Department of Economics
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:
. . . It is simply false to assert, as Irving Kristol does, that the

only people in American life who cry out for equality are the privileged children of the upper-middle classes who have been educated beyond their intellectual means. There are many groups in America who perceive themselves as oppressed, and who demand redress of the injustices perpetrated upon them by the inequalities of the American economy. I refer to farm workers and various welfare- and prisoners'-rights groups. Perhaps Mr. Kristol believes that these people have no right to receive more than they currently do. Nevertheless, he cannot dismiss their complaints as the metaphysical yearnings of a spoiled, semi-intellectual class.

Secondly, Mr. Kristol is thoroughly disingenuous in his indictment of professors for failing to supply him with a "precise definition [of equality] from which statesmen and social critics can take their bearings." Politicians and their critics have been taking their bearings on vague definitions for quite a while now. For the practical purposes of moving America toward a social and economic order which its citizens perceive as more just than the present one, the following criteria should be sufficient: a just distribution of wealth would be one in which no person were denied certain essential goods which are well within the means of our industrial system to supply; a just distribution of wealth would be one in which no individual has so much economic power that he can manipulate the political system in his own interests. Clearly the country need not wait for a definition that would satisfy the presumably rigorous editorial standards of the *Public Interest* before taking practical measures like these: deciding in principle that no American should be without decent food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and educational facilities. . . . While it is difficult to conceive of measures short of confiscation that would limit extreme wealth, anyone who has been reading the newspapers recently knows that powerful economic interests have used their political muscle to circumvent the anti-trust laws, to block consumer-protection legislation, to fight anti-pollution action, to prevent the allocation of monies to mass transportation, and to get windfall profits in military procurement and now on the commodity exchange. People with a lot of economic power have been



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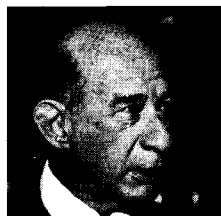
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JEFFREY M. GREEN
Watertown, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The defense of inequality in American society exposes a fundamental error in Irving Kristol's analysis. He states: "Human talents and abilities, as measured, do distribute themselves along a bell-shaped curve . . . the distribution of income is also a bell-shaped curve." . . . But, as Christopher Jencks has recently noted, "If the only sources of income inequality in America were differences in people's genes (inborn abilities), the top fifth of the population would earn only about 1.4 times as much as the bottom fifth. In actuality, the top fifth earns *seven* times as much as the bottom fifth." Similarly, "There is almost as much economic inequality among those who score high on standardized tests as in the general population." Contrary to Mr. Kristol's assertion, then, little correlation exists between the distribution of abilities and income.

This lack of correlation reflects the pervasive inequality of opportunity in our society. Job discrimination, family background, race, and other factors result in economic achievement which is not based on ability. And . . . it is apparent that most of the current demands are for the elimination of these discriminatory barriers to individual achievement. When endorsing this much-heralded concept of equal opportunity, the egalitarian is not attacking the bourgeois ethos . . . but is denouncing society's massive failure to *meet* the bourgeois demand for "a steadily increasing material prosperity for those who apply themselves to that end." . . .

But even granting that the current demand for equality attacks the bourgeois ethos, Mr. Kristol's model of class struggle is still untenable. The model asserts that a "self-designated" class of intellectuals exists, and is, in concert, pursuing power in the name of equality. This sinister class, according to Mr. Kristol, is composed of the similarly motivated intellectuals "on our college faculties . . . and those in government and in the professions . . . and relevant numbers of college students." . . . But not only do the members of this

group, and of each subgroup, demonstrate differing political views (cf. Mr. Kristol vis-à-vis the "intellectuals"), but professionals in particular have always demonstrated (and in their current overwhelming support for Richard Nixon continue to demonstrate) an economic conservatism and an anti-egalitarianism. . . .

Finally, Mr. Kristol avers that the intellectual, as an elitist, has always fought against bourgeois "spiritual egalitarianism." But now he claims the intellectual "pursues power in the name of equality," denying the elitism that ostensibly led him to that power struggle in the first place. The intellectual, it is explained, demands greater equality not to remedy "specific inequities," but rather to remedy a "deficient conception of the common good." Mr. Kristol never actually resolves this paradox of the elitist-egalitarian intellectual.

A more appropriate interpretation of egalitarianism would be that the current widespread demand for greater economic equality is really a class of demands, largely consistent with bourgeois "spiritual egalitarianism." The demands call for equality of opportunity, which would make income more contingent on ability, and would narrow the income gap between rich and poor, and between races. This call to egalitarianism, moreover, is not the product of one class or group. Rather, the widening of democracy to include both political and economic equality is, in the words of Nehru, "the great revolution through which we are passing."

JEFFREY SACHS

Harvard College
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . How an article on "equality" can be written which only barely alludes to inherited wealth is remarkable. One is not born equal when one has income from a million-dollar trust fund. . . . It is this type of inequality that cries out for rectification. . . .

JEROME S. THALER

Yorktown Heights, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jerusalem is included by Irving Kristol among those civilizations which "thought inequality was necessary to achieve a particular ideal of human excellence, both individual and collective." While he may

document this thesis for Athens, Rome, and Elizabethan England, I remind him of this *mishnah* quoted in the Talmudic tractate, Sanhedrin:

How did they admonish the witnesses in cases of capital punishment? They brought them in and said: "You may give evidence that is mere supposition or hearsay or secondhand, or believe you are quoting someone trustworthy. . . . Know that cases punishable by capital punishment are quite different from those punishable by monetary compensation. . . . In capital cases the witness bears responsibility for the blood of the condemned innocent and for the blood of his posterity, that might have been born to him, till eternity. . . . Therefore man was originally created one, to teach that if a person brings about the death of a single human being, Scripture convicts him of causing the death of all mankind; and if a person saves a single human being, Scripture credits him with saving the whole human family. Again, man was originally created one for the sake of peace among men, so that no one shall say to his fellow-man, "My father was greater than your father." . . . Again, man was originally created one to proclaim God's greatness; for when man mints many coins with a single seal they emerge identical, but when God stamps every man with the seal of Adam, each emerges a unique personality. Therefore every human being is entitled to say, "For my sake was the whole world created." . . .

This is derived from the very heart of the jurisprudence of Jerusalem. For almost two millennia this egalitarian political philosophy was taken seriously by Jewish thinkers, leaders, and their equals, the "ordinary Jews."

[Rabbi] ELY E. PILCHIK

Congregation B'nai Jeshurun
Short Hills, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol exhibits a hostility to intellectuals which is puzzling, first of all, because he is one himself. He also states that most of those who claim to be "intellectuals" do not qualify for this classification because they lack intellectual distinction. But who is he to judge the intellectual competence of several million people? . . . He then goes on to say that it is this group of "self-styled intellectuals" who are looking at their society in a highly critical way and are quick to adopt an adversary

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position toward it." I say thank God that this group exists and that they are critical of our present culture. . . .

Mr. Kristol asserts that of all classes it is the working class which is now most resistant to the true spirit of radicalism. If this is in some ways true, it is only because of a gap in education and awareness. Working-class people know something is radically wrong and have a vague feeling of uneasiness and discontent with things as they are. . . . But they do not understand the forces at work which have brought us to our present crisis. They would be just as radical as the intellectuals if they knew the true nature of the issues. Most importantly, they would realize that our problems are capable of solution if the right measures are applied. . . .

SIDNEY SIEGEL
North Hollywood, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I think Irving Kristol is right when he states that it is not so much "equality" which concerns the intellectual, but the "quality" of life in our . . . society. When intellectuals advocate a society based on equality, they are saying that we have achieved our economic needs, but there must be more. . . .

Mr. Kristol is only half-right when he says that the professional classes of our society are engaged in a class struggle with the business community for status and power. There is a struggle—and it is for the *soul* of America, but not for power and status. Status has already been achieved and power is unattainable, since the business community is solidly entrenched in the fabric of American life and most members of the professional classes are to a considerable degree dependent on the largesse of business. Mr. Kristol is right when he says that intellectuals live in guilt because the "good life" they lead is made possible by our society with all its confusion of values. Perhaps this is what makes the intellectual unhappy. If he has sold his birthright, then what is there left? . . .

AL MINTZ

YM&YWH
Brockton, Massachusetts

IRVING KRISTOL writes:

In my essay I tried to put the issue of "equality" into a larger historical and philosophical framework, because I believe that it can

be properly understood only within such a context. My correspondents, for the most part, try to shrink the scope of the discussion so as to encompass little more than the familiar issues of current political controversy. I do not think this is a fruitful procedure, and for the following reason: Let us assume that all the reforms envisaged by my correspondents have become the law of the land. What would be the consequences? Now, as a matter of fact, this is not a rhetorical question. These reforms are already the law of the land in such nations as Britain and Sweden, and we *know* the consequences. They are, to put it mildly, disappointing.

Why is it that our reformers do not enthusiastically point to Sweden and Britain as excellent models for the United States to emulate? Why don't they praise their superior economic performance, the greater tranquility of their bodies politic, the larger contentment of their citizenry? They do not because they cannot. The egalitarian reforms in these countries have satisfied no one and settled nothing. The college students are, if anything, more militantly hostile to their society than their counterparts in the U.S. The trade unions are, if anything, more restless and belligerent. The intellectuals are, if anything, more contemptuous of their society than they used to be. The ordinary citizen is, if anything, more troubled and bewildered than ever before. And, above all, the passion for equality, so far from having been appeased, has been exacerbated, so that there is more bitter controversy over equality—and more inequalities—in Sweden and Britain today than was the case five or ten years ago.

I submit that this experience constitutes significant testimony to the effect that the contemporary demand for egalitarian reform involves much more than meets the eye. The doctrinaire insistence with which these reforms are urged, and the insatiability of the egalitarian passion behind them, ought to give us pause. Reforms, after all, are supposed to "work" in the sense that people should then feel better about their society than they did previously. If reforms are passed that do not have this effect—if, indeed, they appear to have the contrary effect—one is entitled to wonder whether we are operating in the world of political theory

or in the world of political theology.

I thought I had made it clear in my article that I had no particular *a priori* opinions about the degree of equality or inequality appropriate to our—or any other—society. This is a circumstantial matter, and ought not to be governed by abstract doctrine. There is nothing *inherently* good or bad about equality or inequality. The only interesting question is whether changes in the scale of inequality—one way or the other—will make for a society that encourages its citizens to have a good opinion of it. The dogmatic egalitarian is absolutely certain that a redistribution of income and wealth will always have this result. He is so absolutely certain that, when it does not in fact have this result, he can only demand a still more drastic redistribution. That mode of thinking is, I believe, called fanaticism.

SOME specifics:

To Edward T. Chase: I still do believe that any society has to be governed by a principle of justice which legitimates particular inequalities, and that our own society is having trouble finding such a principle. But I have never believed, as you imply, that justice and equality come to the same thing in the end. Similarly, I am all in favor of equal opportunity and of any compensatory program or preferential treatment that will help achieve it. But I do not regard quotas as a contribution to equality of opportunity. "Coaching" a black student so that he can get into medical school or an apprenticeship program is one thing; reserving a spot for him, simply on the basis of his race, is another. Behind your argument, I would guess, lies the presupposition that "true" equality of opportunity can only be said to exist when equality of condition is guaranteed at the outset. This strikes me as an ingenious (and disingenuous) way of advocating equality of condition under the more politically acceptable guise of equality of opportunity.

Incidentally, I cannot accept the notion that black Americans are a crippled people who cannot cope with the world except under "our" benevolent guidance. I doubt very much that they accept it, either.

To Steven Kelman: I'll happily give you that extra \$1,000 in taxes if you can assure me that the

money will be spent to good effect—i.e., that we'll then be living in a nicer and happier country. It's not that I doubt your good intentions. It's just that the experience of the past dozen years makes me skeptical. Perhaps you will agree that such skepticism is not entirely unreasonable.

To Richard Quandt: I think you are unwise to side with Plato—especially the Plato of *The Laws*—as against Aristotle. The society described in *The Laws* has neither opulence nor poverty—nor freedom of any kind. Surely you are not ready to pay that kind of price for economic equality?

I do not know what you mean when you say that income distribution in a modern bourgeois society is characterized by "a small number of high incomes and a very large number of small incomes." You must be using "small" and "high" and "very large" in a very special way, since it is indisputable that income inequality is much narrower in a modern bourgeois society than in any previous one.

As for Gini coefficients—I am reminded of Robert Nisbet's remark that if you need sociology to tell you whether or not you have a ruling class, you don't have one. Similarly, if you need the higher mathematics to tell you whether one society has greater or less economic equality than another, the differences cannot be that important.

To Robert Cooter, Jerry Green, and Janet Yellen: I'll withdraw my request for a "hypothetical optimum" distribution of income if you will tell me how to identify a "constructive solution" to the problem of income inequality. So far as I can see, these come to the same thing.

The reference to Lester Thurow's work is beside the point. I am all in favor of laws against racial discrimination, and if they also produce greater income equality, fine.

To Jeffrey M. Green: I agree with you that the concentration of economic power in this country is politically unhealthy. But that power is concentrated in corporations and trade unions, not in individuals. So far as I can see, all that a multimillionaire can buy himself these days—in the political world, that is—is an ambassadorship. Perhaps that's wrong; but I really cannot get exercised over it.

To Jeffrey Sachs: You confuse differences in ability with differences in IQ. The former are far

greater than the latter. The ratio between the ability of the best major-league baseball players and the lowest minor-league ones is a lot larger than 1.4. Ditto for businessmen, professors, and auto mechanics.

To Jerome S. Thaler: Why does inherited wealth bother you so much? It accounts for only a small fraction of existing income inequalities. I myself think it is bad

for young people to inherit a lot of money, and I would go along with a revision of the inheritance laws that aimed at a broader dispersal of large fortunes. But I wouldn't expect it to make any great difference to American society as a whole.

To Rabbi Pilchik: There is nothing "egalitarian" in the assertion that all men—rich and poor—are equal in the eyes of God.

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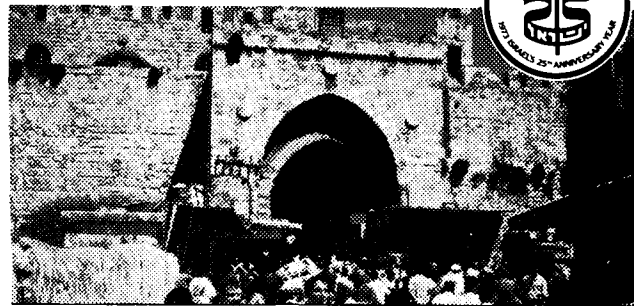
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "'Serrano' vs. the People" [September 1972], Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Leslie Lenkowsky attack the judicial decisions (beginning in 1971 with *Serrano v. Priest*) that would upset the traditional state systems of school finance which today make the level of spending for every child's public education dependent on the property wealth of his school district. The argument of Messrs. Finn and Lenkowsky against *Serrano* parallels complaints made by . . . Daniel P. Moynihan. (See

Mr. Moynihan's article, "Equalizing Education—In Whose Benefit?," *Public Interest*, Fall 1972.)

Citing each other as authority, the contrapuntal chorus of this anti-*Serrano* squad is not always clear. But their message certainly includes this much: 1) It would be dangerous and undemocratic for the courts to violate the legislative integrity of education by requiring uniform expenditure for every child in the state and by mandating higher overall levels of expenditure for education; 2) it would be dubious policy to reduce

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educational spending for the poor in order to increase it for the rich; 3) raising the salaries of today's teachers would not necessarily improve education; 4) spending more money on schools would be unlikely to raise achievement scores very much. We agree with all four points. These propositions reflect perfectly sound social instincts; it is merely the critics' understanding of *Serrano* that lags. Perhaps something useful can be accomplished here with a clarification or two.

The essential facts are these. School districts are dependent upon the local property tax but vary enormously in their taxable resources per pupil; hence, districts with low taxable-property-per-pupil typically have relatively little to spend despite their higher tax effort. The state "equalization" programs praised by Mr. Finn *et al.* are a joke; in some respects they even operate to give preference to rich districts. This is the case in California; in 1968-69, spending in larger districts (with over 1,000 pupils) ranged from \$550 in a poor elementary district (with a 4-per-cent tax rate) to about \$1,250 in a rich elementary district (with a 2.5-per-cent rate). In *Serrano* the California Supreme Court rejected such a "system" as the basis for allocating funds to public education as unconstitutional; other courts have followed, and the issue is now before the Supreme Court in a Texas case argued this past October (*San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez*).

The critics fear the scope and impact of such decisions but show limited understanding of the basic concept. Writing in the *Public Interest*, Mr. Moynihan states the issue to be "... simply whether the courts shall order equal educational expenditure." Anyone who believes this can scarcely have read the decisions. The courts were not even asked to equalize expenditure, and they explicitly rejected any such result. The rule of these cases is merely this: that the level of resources spent upon a child may not be affected by the amount of high-value real estate in his school district: "spending may not be a function of wealth." This is all the courts have decided.

Nothing in *Serrano* compels either equality of expenditure or specific levels of expenditures. By rejecting district wealth as a basis for spending, the courts have in

no way impinged upon options available to the state legislatures. A state may spend extra money on children who are gifted, disadvantaged, younger, older, play the flute, or hear poorly. The state may even preserve and enhance local control by making spending (in whatever degree) dependent upon the tax rate that local voters are willing to bear, provided each district can raise an equivalent amount per pupil with a given tax rate. With regard to the total amounts spent on education, *Serrano* leaves the legislatures free to spend less or more than they are currently spending. The question of *how much* should be spent on education will necessarily, in Mr. Moynihan's words, be "deliberately chosen and legitimately enacted by the elected representatives of the people"—not by a court.

Because the courts have left to the legislatures the decision of how much should be spent, Messrs. Finn and Lenkowsky's fear of a "large net increase in educational spending" must necessarily rest on a political prediction that legislatures rather than cut expenditures in rich districts will choose to "level-up," even though that would mean spending more overall. Although this prediction may turn out to be correct, it is certainly open to question, given the present general annoyance with public education and the numerous recent refusals by local taxpayers to increase educational expenditures. In any case, let us assume the political process in the state legislatures should increase total expenditures. This would only suggest that parents in rich districts are unwilling (the arguments of Christopher Jencks and James Coleman notwithstanding) to have their children carry the risks from lower expenditures which are now borne by children in poorer districts.

Rather than usurping legislative prerogatives, *Serrano* will leave to the legislatures these issues of allocation and simply require that the decision be based on relevant educational policies, not on district wealth. The "Serranophobes" concede that the system stinks and that the legislatures should act. However, in the face of fifty years of evidence to the contrary they assert that legislatures will act—and wisely—but only if *Serrano* goes away; if *Serrano* is the law these same legislators will become damned fools and

squander public treasure on the middle class. Perhaps the critic is correct, but is he then entitled to cloak himself in the mantle of democracy? Ironically, it is the *Serrano* critics, not the courts, who distrust the legislative process.

Apart from the usurpation argument, the critics' primary thrust is that *Serrano* will hurt the poor. They imply that the status quo might (by the chance distribution of real property wealth) be better for the poor because the poor live in cities and that the cities are property rich. While they selectively identify certain cities that are, in fact, property rich, numerous contrary examples can be cited. In Washington, D.C., for example, 14 of the 17 districts with more than 10,000 students fall below the norm. Of California's large cities, San Francisco—with 2 per cent of the state's pupils—is property rich. Many of the other large cities (like Los Angeles) are about average, and a number are considerably below average, as is the case with San Diego, Fresno, and Modesto. In all events, even if on the basis of comprehensive data not yet available it were someday shown that a majority of the poor do live in rich districts, there would still be all those poor who live in poor districts and are enjoying both high taxes and low spending. They cannot afford to escape to private schools, along with their middle-class neighbors in such districts.

The critics also argue that *Serrano* will hurt the poor because its effect will be regressive and wasteful. Their primary fear seems to be that any *Serrano*-induced increase in spending will be eaten up by inflationary salary boosts for middle- and upper-middle income teachers—"the milkman will end up paying more so that his children's teacher can earn more." Given the outlook for the teachers' market over the next decade, this fear seems fanciful.

As any first-year economics student can recite, a price (and teachers' salaries are a price) is determined by supply and demand. There are market forces at work on both the supply and demand side of the equation that make it very unlikely that teachers' salaries will rise in the next decade at anywhere near the rate we have experienced since 1950. On the one hand, the number of

children who will enter elementary and secondary schools in the next decade will *decrease*. Therefore, unlike the 50's and 60's, school districts will not have ever-increasing needs for additional teachers because of higher enrollments. This decrease in the demand for teachers will be occurring at the same time that the supply of new teachers is at the greatest level in American history.

The net result of these market forces will be, in the words of the Fleischmann report, that "the supply of teachers will almost certainly far exceed demand from the mid-1970's until the mid-1980's." . . . While it can be argued that teachers' unions will be able to overcome these market forces and extract inflationary salary increases, the work of economists in studying other industries suggests that this is very unlikely. . . .

The critics implicitly acknowledge that the effect of an increase in spending might not be simply to raise teachers' salaries but instead may be used to hire additional teachers; however, they imply that the only effect of this would be to give additional employment to middle-class teachers. If more teachers are hired, surely these additional inputs will give the children in poorer districts the possibility of new and broader curricular options and experimentation as well as smaller classes. Any calculus of the distributional effects of *Serrano* must take into account the benefits of such additional inputs.

But additional inputs, say the critics, are of little consequence in the light of what might be called the argument from futility. Giving poor districts more resources is, in any event, purposeless, since more money buys so little additional education. By this they mean that it buys only a modest increase in scores on standardized achievement tests. This conclusion, extracted from Coleman and Jencks, may possibly be right; one day, with reliable and adequate data, they might convince the numerous and often persuasive skeptics. A money-doesn't-matter argument is currently being promoted in the Supreme Court litigation by certain school districts that are opposing *Serrano*; these districts are—guess who?—Grosse Pointe, Michigan; Montgomery County, Maryland; Beverly Hills, California; and others all near the top of the wealth and spending scale. Perhaps their

implicit contention is that only the rich know how to spend money well.

We don't know whether more money buys higher achievement scores or significantly raises children's income as adults. Nor is either conclusion necessary to *Serrano*. We prefer to believe (with Grosse Pointe?) that the effects of educational spending are real, whether or not they are testable or lead to higher personal income. These effects include the acquisition of countless skills (the cello, drama, foreign language, and the ability to handle complex scientific equipment); they include also the opportunity for the school to broaden the curriculum in an effort to touch capacities for learning that in some children may be released only by access to a special experience or area of study. Perhaps most important of all—as Messrs. Finn and Lenkowsky themselves argue—society must be prepared for "heroic experimentation." *Serrano*, of course, invites such experimentation and asks only that the capacity of experiment be fairly and rationally

allocated and not be confined to the rich districts.

Christopher Jencks might have added that *Serrano* is justified simply as a step toward making the long years of compulsory education a decent experience for the child. We would agree with this and suggest further that the quality of the child's experience may strongly influence his adhesion to and concern with the social order for which his school explicitly strives to prepare him.

Serrano is not, we concede, the gateway to utopia for the poor or anybody else. It is merely a unique invitation to legislative creativity—a way of telling the responsible agency to turn off the discrimination machine and build us something that has a rational connection with the legitimate aims of government. For those who believe in the political process, such an invitation should come more as an opportunity than a threat.

JOHN E. COONS

ROBERT H. MNOOKIN

School of Law
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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Leslie Lenkowsky against school-finance reform can be faulted on three grounds:

1) It presents a narrow and selective interpretation of *Serrano*-type court cases.

2) It misapplies recent research on educational achievement.

3) It suggests an alternative solution which is logically inconsistent with the arguments presented earlier in the article.

Serrano-type court cases attack the pattern and distribution of educational expenditures, not their level. Hence *Serrano* is concerned with equity rather than with adequacy of educational achievement. To argue that the gross disparities pointed up by *Serrano* should not be redressed because equalization implies leveling up rather than leveling down is equivalent to telling poor children that it is just too politically difficult to give them their constitutional rights.

Moreover, the authors argue as though the trial of the pending suits is going to settle the matter. Actually, the reformers behind these cases have asked the courts to rule on the constitutionality of present financing arrangements rather than to design specific solutions. Following the court decisions, I foresee a period of legislative and executive action to devise the necessary remedies, not a period in which judges will be asked "to resolve economic, social, and educational issues of uncommon complexity." . . .

The authors cite studies by Coleman and Jencks and others as evidence that the commitment of more resources to education will not necessarily result in any improvement. It is not the purpose of this letter to take a position in the current debate over the relationship between spending on schools and educational outcomes. It is my opinion that this debate is very far from being resolved. People who ignore or discount the findings of Coleman and Jencks may have closed their minds, but people who think that these studies prove that schools make no difference are also wrong.

To argue that the finding that "dollars make no difference" justifies the maintenance of a highly regressive and inequitable system is a non sequitur. Even if dollars do not make a difference, poor children should have the same

right to the "frills" of modern, bright classrooms, smaller classes, and pleasant learning situations that wealthier children have. Taxpayers in low-wealth districts certainly should have the same right to pay low taxes as those in high-wealth districts.

Finally, the article suggests that additional money would be more wisely spent on income maintenance than on schools. In my view this alternative holds no great promise. Income-maintenance programs, as they now exist and as they have been proposed, offer very little chance of reducing racial or economic segregation. The patterns of housing and peer-group associations are not going to be changed by providing families with little better than subsistence-level incomes.

The authors do suggest one remedy with which I can agree—their call for "heroic experimentation." But how can the low-wealth school district afford it under today's financing arrangements?

H. REED SAUNDERS

Task Force on School Finance
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Several of the important questions with respect to educational finance are at the moment far from answered. It is interesting, however, that writers such as Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Leslie Lenkowsky find it easy to accept questionable results which support their own predispositions on various subjects. They contend that fiscal neutrality would redistribute money in incorrect directions (i.e., toward teachers and not strongly enough toward central cities), and that added money for the schools would add little in terms of pupil achievement. Their conclusions are based mainly on an interpretation of the research results of a few social scientists.

As is the case with most authors who want to "prove" that educational expenditures are not productive, Messrs. Finn and Lenkowsky cite the Coleman study and the more recent Jencks study. I find it highly illuminating that they imply that only a handful of social scientists comprehend the statistical intricacies of these studies. Perhaps this is a tacit admission of their own inability to comprehend the sharp criticisms of Coleman's methodol-

ogy which apply almost equally strongly to many of Jencks's results. (See Samuel Bowles and Henry M. Levin, "The Determinants of Scholastic Achievement—An Appraisal of Some Recent Evidence," *Journal of Human Resources* 3, Winter 1968; and Glen G. Cain and Harold W. Watts, "Problems in Making Policy Inferences from the Coleman Report," *American Sociological Review* 35, April 1970.) Even for the statistically unsophisticated it should not be difficult to comprehend that high levels of spending on education generally occur in districts for which typical socioeconomic status indicators will also be high. To attempt to determine whether it is the differences in educational expenditures or the differences in status which explain learning differentials is simply impossible given the data we have to work with. A simple truth is that if statistical techniques are used which feed in variables in order to explain some phenomenon, the first variable fed in will appear to explain most of the variance actually due not only to itself but to other variables which are systematically related to it. Since both Jencks and Coleman enter socioeconomic variables first, most variance in achievement is "explained" by them, and little is left to be explained by educational expenditures. As is demonstrated very ably by Hanushek and Kain (in "On the Value of 'Equality of Educational Opportunity' as a Guide to Public Policy," in *On Equality of Educational Opportunity*, edited by Frederick Mosteller and Daniel P. Moynihan), the set of educational-expenditure variables used by Coleman can explain more variance in achievement when entered into the analysis first than can either the set of peer-group or family variables when they are entered into the estimating equation first. Any statements made about the small amount of variance in performance that can be attributed to school-input variables can therefore be made equally strongly about the other types of variables. Their relative strength is simply a function of the authors' essentially arbitrary choice of an ordering of variables. Even though Jencks supposedly understood this problem in Coleman's work, it is noticeable that he uses the same methodology in his book *Inequality*.

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The moral of the above story is that we do a very poor job of statistically confirming what helps children achieve. The reasons for this are various, and include seriously inadequate data sources and exceptionally naive attempts to build mathematical models of the educational process. The attempts so far have had little information on expenditures over time on various students, almost no useful information regarding quality of teaching, and little sophistication in the attempt to determine which inputs at which point in a child's life are important for academic achievement. But to state that our work on explaining educational achievement is poor is very different from stating that . . . none of the variables used in this analysis leads to achievement. . . . To interpret not finding a statistically significant relationship as meaning that no relationship exists is simply stretching the usefulness of statistical methodology beyond its limited capacity. . . .

It seems then that the strongest case that can be made on the basis of such studies as Coleman and Jencks is that statistical methods combined with simple models of how educational output is produced have not been able to indicate that a significant relationship exists between *added* school inputs and *increased* pupil test scores. This is certainly not nearly as strong a statement as the often implied finding that "school inputs have been found to have little or no effect on school results." . . .

The other point stressed in the article is that fiscal neutrality would lead to redistribution away from "needy" pupils. If the ability-to-pay for education is defined as property wealth per pupil, then this contention might be correct; but the problem is with the measure of ability. . . . A measure of ability must be derived which takes into account all sources of tax revenues in a locality as well as competing claims for this revenue for other public purposes. Thus, if central cities have little ability to finance education because other "necessary" public services demand so many tax dollars, an accurate "ability measure" would reflect this condition. If such a measure of ability is then equalized among communities, it is doubtful that the results implied by Finn and Lenkowsky would follow. . . .

Perhaps the use of property values as the measure of ability is to be avoided; but to avoid the provision of equal opportunity may have strongly negative consequences for the poor. It should be noted that the preceding statement is equally true even if the only thing purchased by school expenditures is a pleasant experience for pupils. It is difficult to find precedents for suggesting that states should set up systems through which, in a publicly-provided service, desirable goods are provided to citizens on the basis of wealth. . . .

Messrs. Finn and Lenkowsky imply that educational expenditures may increase achievement significantly in districts in which less than some necessary minimum is being spent. . . . The fact that added educational expenditures have little effect on test scores on the average over the nation does not mean that added expenditures would not have a strong positive effect on test scores in those districts which spend little because of the lack of property wealth. It is to just such districts that the *Serrano* decision, correctly implemented, could provide much financial aid.

JOHN S. AKIN

Institute for Research on Poverty
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

CHESTER E. FINN, JR. and LESLIE

LENKOWSKY write:

Our correspondents have thoughtfully provided COMMENTARY readers with excellent examples of the logic—rather, the illogic—animating those reformers afflicted with what might be termed "Serranophilia." Thus, the letters by H. Reed Saunders and by John E. Coons and Robert H. Mnookin contend that *Serrano* and its kin are nothing more than tax cases when, in fact, their legal *raison d'être* rests upon an affirmation of the fundamental importance of schooling, the belief that the fiscal affairs of school systems have much to do with the quality of service available, and the conviction that such quality affects the educational experience of children. Then, too, we learn from these letters that the courts will intervene to prod legislatures and executives to take appropriate action; conveniently forgotten is the certainty that such remedies as are chosen will last only until the next round of litigation.

The Serranophiles also say that the legislatures will save us from the excesses of *Serrano* through all manner of corrective acts, including limiting the power of the teachers' unions to bargain for salary increases and providing specially earmarked grants. But if that is the case, critics like ourselves may be forgiven our bewilderment as to why *Serrano* was necessary in the first instance.

A certain blindness is much in evidence among our correspondents. Despite a consensus of results from at least three major studies, one comprehensive review of research, and countless smaller reports, the new reformers refuse to concede the validity of the social-science findings on education that began with the Coleman Report and continue through the work of Christopher Jencks (although Jencks's study in fact draws a policy implication congenial to their own). We do not for a moment suggest that reading scores or adult earnings are the only school "outputs" worthy of note, but we do suggest that the burden of coming up with more persuasive evidence now rests on those who would reject the findings of Coleman, Jencks, Moynihan, Mosteller, the RAND Corporation, *et al.*

Messrs. Coons and Mnookin recognize that there are differences among cities. So did we; that, in part, led us to conclude that the courts are an unsuitable instrument for the reform of school financing. Yet one would be mistaken to look for much rejoicing among the new reformers if the Supreme Court should decide *Rodriguez* in such a fashion as to limit its ruling to the particular case in dispute. It is *national principles* that our correspondents seek, and it is national principles that we consider least helpful in reforming fifty disparate state systems of school finance, each of which contains hundreds of special cases and unique conditions.

Our correspondents accuse us of anti-democratic bias. But we did not contend that only the rich know how to spend money well, or that the various state legislatures never squander the taxpayers' money. Indeed, we thought the absurdity of those propositions was clear enough so as not to require comment. Our argument was, simply, that educational reform has very little to do with issues of school financing; moreover, that

changes in school financing have perhaps even less to do with tax reform or progressive income redistribution.

Let us, however, even assume for the sake of argument that *Serrano* is simply a case for equitable taxation: is it then to be applauded? Our purpose was to show that nothing in the field of school finance is any longer as simple as one might wish, that ending one form of inequality usually induces another, and that the courts and those who make use of them would do well to consider the second- and third-order consequences of their actions. As we read the complex data in this area, certain propositions seem basic: First, low property wealth is very imperfectly related to the income levels of a community. Second, a community with high personal income—typically a suburb—generally also has a high tax rate for educational purposes, but a relatively low overall tax burden. It spends much of what it raises on schooling, less on other services. Third, a community with high property wealth—notably a big city—is likely to have an extremely high overall tax burden, but to spend a much smaller portion of it on schooling. The amount spent per pupil may be quite high. And finally, voter preference for educational expenditures varies directly with personal income.

From these, we conclude that *Serrano's* rule of "fiscal neutrality" will provide tax relief primarily to middle-class property owners living in suburbs (and to the small population of rural folk), while doing little good and much possible harm in the cities. Suggested formulas that comply with the "*Serrano* rule"—such as the "power equalization" advocated by Mr. Coons—do not correct this problem and may make matters worse. The demonstration is complicated, but has been set forth recently in a note in the *Yale Law Journal* (Vol. 81: at 1303, 1972) and in an article by Arthur Solomon and George Peterson in the *Public Interest* (Winter 1973). The essential points are that property wealth and community income are not the same and that districts with large concentrations of low-income residents tend to spend a smaller proportion of their tax revenues on education.

John S. Akin recognizes these points in warning against the use of "ability-to-pay for education" criteria. He would prefer a more

general measure of fiscal ability, which takes into account "competing claims" for public revenues. This is a valid argument if one is interested in restructuring the fiscal arrangement of American federalism, although there is no reason why education should be the only service upon which reform focuses. But it is not the argument of *Serrano*, which is rather exclusively concerned with relieving the alleged inequities of community wealth, i.e., property valuation. This approach is primarily of tactical merit; presumably not even the most activist courts are yet ready to adjudicate the rectitude of different state-local patterns of providing public services. Yet the decision to let smaller cities pay for fire, police, and sanitation on a county-wide basis, while large cities assume their own costs, is clearly at least as important in shaping "competing claims" as are indices of potential tax revenues.

There is little in Mr. Akin's argument about the Coleman Report, either, that would lead us to revise our assertion that few social scientists understand its statistical intricacies. While the technical point Mr. Akin makes about the order of entry of statistical variables is absolutely correct, he fails to emphasize that the Coleman analysis has been replicated, taking this issue into

account. The most thorough of the reanalyses aimed at settling this dispute was performed by Marshall S. Smith (in Mosteller and Moynihan, *On Equality of Educational Opportunity*, pp. 230-342). After assessing the merits of the criticisms of the Coleman Report, and agreeing with Mr. Akin and others that there are good reasons for suspecting statistical biases in the results, Smith nonetheless finds himself in basic agreement with the original findings. We might reiterate that Smith's (and Coleman's original) position seems to us to be increasingly adopted by scholars who have studied the issue.

The point of this lengthy reply is not to settle the question of whether the Coleman findings are correct. Rather, we are simply asserting that in recent years the conventional wisdom about schooling has been seriously questioned. Virtually every commentator, including Mr. Akin, agrees that the issues raised by *On Equality of Educational Opportunity* ought to be settled, either by disproof or by developing new models of schooling that are effective. The *Serranophiles* offer a third alternative—ignorance—pretending that the virtue of the conventional wisdom has never lost its loveliness. We feel that the course of action suggested by *Serrano* is undesirable

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and will only attach to the banner of educational reform issues that are no longer germane and have the potential only for creating endless discord and confusion.

Free Speech & Pornography

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . There is a general, and mistaken, view that pornography must be protected under the First Amendment—that prohibitions against smut are an infringement on freedom of speech. I consider this belief to be extremely pernicious and dangerous. . . . Since we already have anti-pornography laws, the above viewpoint leads to the conclusion that we are already violating freedom of speech. Moreover, it leads many people to conclude that in some cases we *should* violate freedom of speech, as when Norman Podhoretz says [*“Living with Free Speech,”* November 1972]: “Americans commanded to accept absolute freedom of speech may be compared with Christians commanded to turn the other cheek: *neither can succeed in obeying* but both are required to try, and both will be led uneasily into casuistry whenever it *becomes necessary to sin* against the clear sense of the injunction” (emphasis added). . . .

The point which must be understood here is that freedom of speech was never intended to apply literally to speech but to the communication of ideas by whatever means one might wish to employ. And pornography is not an idea, it is a mode of expression. . . .

I would argue that what makes something pornographic is that . . . it contains the implicit notion that sex and the human body are evil. Be that as it may, however, to prohibit pornography is to prohibit a certain way of expressing something, not to prohibit the free expression of an idea; the idea itself can always be expressed in a neutral manner—i.e., physiologists and psychotherapists continually talk about sex but they do so in a non-pornographic way. . . .

HOWARD S. KATZ

New York City

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

I'm afraid that Mr. Katz's distinction doesn't wash. If we aren't free to say things in whatever way we wish, we may have the freedom to propound abstract propositions,

but we don't have freedom of speech.

Liberal-Jews' Jew

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was enchanted by Dorothy Rabinowitz's “Summer of '72” [November 1972], showing us a batch of Jewish intellectuals sitting around a seaside cottage and straining at gnats. They were so accurately drawn, even to the poor little unspanked four-year-old, that I experienced a pure (if unavoidably grim) thrill of recognition.

And then, a little later, came the clap of recognition—the big Oh, that's what accurate observation is for, I suppose. Because, like Norman Podhoretz, I had seen the irrational quality in some liberals' opposition to Nixon, but it wasn't until I read, “Here are Jews who wish more than anything to transcend being Jews” that I understood: the Jews Miss Rabinowitz was talking about begin their transcendence by choosing a “Jew” to take their place. In short, Richard Nixon is what you might call the liberal-Jews' Jew.

Once you see this, everything falls into place: Nixon is clearly the victim of restrictive covenants which anyone who's ever watched gentleman's-agreement anti-Semitism in action can recognize at once (and a good many did on Election Day, apparently). He has to work harder than any gentleman is expected to, never gets a break from any but his own kind, and the only reason he can get in at all is that the old-boy network can't keep him from making the highest mark on the entrance exam. But in Nixon's case, intelligence is defined as wiliness, energy as pushiness—anybody here recognize this technique? And a willingness to reverse himself when his chosen remedy for inflation didn't work was defined as lack of principle even while the liberals were grooving on McGovern's call for a President who would have the courage to change his mind.

But economic controls didn't constitute the only liberal neighborhood where property values seemed to go down sharply when Nixon moved in. There was an almost audible gasp here in Academia, Massachusetts when Nixon actually proposed what amounted to a guaranteed minimum income; after a moment (doubtless to allow for reversing gears), though,

the Harvard voices lined up on the local public-TV channel, ready to teach me and thee that, though American liberals had long maintained the necessity of doing something like what Nixon proposed, the idea was now tainted. A baby with *that* name on its birth certificate was just ineligible, that's all. (And if Nixon thought he could get around it by marrying Pat Moynihan, he had another think coming: the intelligent, energetic, adaptable Moynihan, it was quickly seen, must have had a Jewish grandmother.) All around me, I found homeowners in my liberal neighborhood setting up For Sale signs on their front lawns. Indeed, some of them got so frantic that they were willing to move quite near William F. Buckley, Jr., whose neighborhood they had in the past always declared quite undesirable.

I needn't list the other dreams that became nightmares simply by appearing in a Nixon address—e.g., an end to knee-jerk anti-Communism, which was what one might have thought diplomacy with Russia and China meant, until it was Nixon who did it—because the sound of strained machinery was reaching more ears than just mine. I suspect the rise in the black vote for Nixon came from those experienced with the kind of racism that shows up when you embarrass the intellectuals by getting off the black-studies reservation and making it in the real world; those people proved to have a keen ear, too. So did some Irish who remember when Grace Kelly's father could row all right but didn't have gentlemanly-enough antecedents to make the crew. And then there are the Italians, Poles, Slavs, and Greeks—all of them, like the Jews, perhaps had names too difficult for the fourth-grade teacher, who gave the class the impression that anything more complicated than Perkins was somehow *déclassé*.

I don't know for sure, of course, . . . but I have a feeling that it was the image of Nixon as the liberal-Jews' Jew that was responsible for Nixon voters turning out as if they were rallying to support an underdog in spite of Nixon's huge lead in the polls. It was like Shakespeare's comedies: you have to laugh, but you know what you're giggling at is also the stuff of tragedy.

MAGGIE RENNERT
Somerville, Massachusetts



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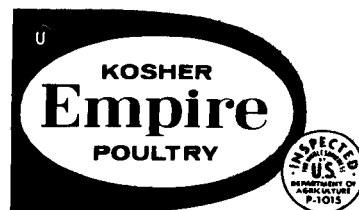
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Higher Education for All?

The Case of Open Admissions

Martin Mayer

ACCESS to education has been one of the most durable issues in the political life of this century, and not just in the United States. Lunacharsky's expansion of the Russian secondary schools persuaded visitors that the Soviet future would work; Jean Zay's democratization of French schooling was the most admired (and the most feared) accomplishment of the Léon Blum government in the 1930's. In England in the 1960's, the left wing of the Labor party went along with Harold Wilson's imposition of charges on prescription drugs in return for the establishment of Open University, a television-based, degree-granting extension program. African political life has been torn apart by the debate between those who wish to expend scarce resources on universities for the benefit of a numerically small leadership and those who wish to use the money to build a broad system of secondary schools (in most regions of Africa the "elitists" have won).

Like so much else that has occurred across the oceans in the 20th century, these issues were first raised in America during the 19th. Indeed, by the time the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association published its "Cardinal Principles" in 1918, the idea if not the reality of universal secondary education had been completely established everywhere in the United States outside the South. Moreover, many of the publicly funded "land-grant colleges" were already required by their state's constitution (not just by law) to accept all applications from graduates of the state's high schools.

Few of the extensions of American education were egalitarian in original intent. The founding fathers sought not to eliminate either distinction or aristocracy, but to rest the recognition of distinction on merit rather than on birth. Proposing a system of twenty fee-supported secondary schools for Virginia, Thomas Jefferson urged that each take one scholarship boy from each elementary school in its area—and keep the best individual in the group through the entire program. "By this means," he wrote, "twenty of the

best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually. . . ." Subsequent expansion, especially of higher education with the federal land-grant subsidy, was argued for in large part on grounds of utility: the presumed role of universities in promoting agricultural and mechanical arts. No surplus of applicants was foreseen; numbers, it was thought, would be held down by the loss of income necessarily suffered when a boy went to college rather than to work. Only unusual ambition, or perhaps unusual talent, would lead to attendance at college, and a kind of osmosis would draw through higher education those who would most benefit from it.

In fact, of course, social propellants intruded almost from the start. Because attendance at college involved the sacrifice of income, sending a boy to college became a significant example of what Veblen called "conspicuous consumption," affirming the position of the family. And in turn, university alumni (not necessarily graduates), if only because they were drawn mostly from families of income and influence, came increasingly to dominate the leadership positions of society. This is not to deny the hunger for learning that could drive a Sam Johnson to Oxford or a Felix Frankfurter to New York's City College—but City College at the turn of the century was a no-elective, post-primary school that took students from eighth grade and sent them forth with a B.A. five hard years later.

After World War I, the notion that going to college was the way to get ahead in the world took hold in the United States, and then reality came to match belief. An increasingly professionalized society demanded academic preparation rather than apprenticeship from entrants to the professions (even in teaching, where post-secondary "training" was once considered more than enough); and an increasingly bureaucratized business world established educational requirements for entry to the managerial levels of enterprise (even in retailing, where everyone admitted that a talent for selling was a wholly independent trait). What S. M. Miller has called "credentialism" became a guiding principle in wide areas of economic activity, accepted by both employer and job applicant. In 1971, according to a study by the American Council on Educa-

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tion, 85 per cent of black freshmen and 73 per cent of "the non-blacks" said they were going to college "to get a better job."

The other side of this coin, of course, was that those who did not pick up tangible evidence of higher education lost their chance to become part of the nation's professional and managerial cadre. What had started as an educational ladder, one of several routes upward for the mobile, became a set of educational barriers, hurdles that had to be cleared on the *only* way ahead. The demand for college places far exceeded the supply, and except in a few states access to university became subject to some form of competitive examination.

I

IN New York City, up until the late 1960's selection to the free, tax-supported City University (which enrolled about 140,000 students in 1969) was made according to high-school grades, supposedly uniform across all the city's schools. In 1920, a graduate with a 72 average would have gained entry to City College, recently promoted to post-secondary status; by the late 1960's, most of the four-year colleges in the city system were requiring an 82 average, which in effect meant the top 40 per cent of the city's high-school graduates (or the top sixth of the age group, academically, because three-fifths of the city's adolescents do not complete an academic program in an academic high school). For entrance to the city's two-year junior colleges (locally called "Community Colleges," though none in fact drew from a geographically restricted area), requirements were generally much lower: a 70 average, which was earned by almost 90 per cent of all graduates from the high schools.

Thus, though neither a "general" high-school diploma nor a vocational diploma granted automatic entrance to any college, City University was deep in the social-mobility business long before the day of Open Admissions; at all times in its history, 90-odd per cent of its entering freshmen were from homes where neither parent had attended college. The fact is, however, that these entering freshmen were not themselves "representative" of the high-school population as a whole. The "general" program in the high schools was heavily black (and Puerto Rican), and in both high-school grades and in competitive exams, black students consistently ranked lower than white students. With increasing frequency since the 1940's, educators and social reformers have been drawing baleful correlations between the preponderance of whites in the universities and in the seats of the mighty. At one level, promoters of the black cause began to demand greater opportunities for blacks to move up the educational ladder; at another level, spokesmen began to insist that educational barriers, especially competitive examinations of any

kind, be removed from the forward march of the black young.

At first these pressures concentrated on improvement of secondary education: New York's much advertised Higher Horizons project of the 1950's was started by a junior-high-school principal who had discovered that only about 4 per cent of the graduates of his school went on to college. Programs like Higher Horizons produced a steady but fairly slow expansion in the number of blacks proceeding to college. In 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act made the recruitment of blacks a prime goal of the poverty program, and New York funded its first College Discovery venture. The federal government dropped the other shoe in 1965 in promulgating the Higher Education Act, and a year later the state funded the Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) program, by which students from poor neighborhoods who were not otherwise eligible for regular admission to the City University four-year colleges were accepted into, and paid to attend, special programs run more or less by the colleges and designed to remedy deficiencies in skills and attitudes.

In 1969, nevertheless, a New York City school system that was more than half black and Puerto Rican in student composition was still feeding into a four-year college system that was less than one-tenth black and Puerto Rican. Economic conditions in the city, coupled with the immense demographic bulge of the age-classes born shortly after World War II, meant that a majority of "minority" college-age New Yorkers not in college were unemployed. Especially where the colleges were located in slums, pressure to do something for the young people of the neighborhood had become very strong.

At this time the Board of Higher Education, the controlling body of City University (appointed by the Mayor), began a number of studies looking toward the day when the university would undertake to accept *all* graduates of the city's high schools, regardless of their performance in high school or their achievement in examinations. In general, the evidence turned up by these studies was discouraging: the centerpiece, an examination of the high-school senior class by Vice-Chancellor Robert Birnbaum, produced a well-documented opinion that virtually every New York City high-school graduate reasonably ready for an ordinary college program was already going to college. Nevertheless, both Mayor Lindsay and City University Chancellor Albert Bowker felt a political need to affirm the eventual establishment of an Open Admissions program, to take effect some time in the mid-1970's—a date far enough in the future to ensure that their successors rather than they themselves would be stuck with the problem.

The model originally in mind was the California state system, with its three tiers of higher

education: the universities, which accept the top 12 per cent of each high-school graduating class; separate four-year colleges, which take the balance of the top half; and the two-year junior colleges, which take the rest (plus some non-graduates of high schools). Among the drawbacks of this arrangement is the heavy concentration of blacks and Chicanos in California's junior colleges (a concentration that tends to get heavier as progress is made in desegregating the high schools: the top half of an all-black school is, of course, all black, while the top half of the high-school graduating class nationwide, as measured by standardized tests, is only about 3 per cent black). Such imbalances have consequences: the Black Panther party started at predominantly black Merritt Junior College a few miles down the road from what was an almost entirely white University of California at Berkeley. In New York, the planners had to consider also the fate of the students at the city's four selective-entrance college preparatory high schools. Most of the students who ranked in the bottom 10 per cent of the graduating class at the Bronx High School of Science, for example, were better prepared for college than most of the students in the top 10 per cent of some of the other high schools.

Moreover, if one assumed—as one had to assume—that the great majority of newcomers taken into the four-year colleges under any new program could not routinely handle college work, it was necessary to devise means of helping them catch up. Sensibly, Bowker took an interest in secondary education, and tried to arrange to have five public high schools put under the wing of City University, to experiment with new programs. Some work was already being done, through a program called “College Discovery Prong II,” in which university professors and students were working with about 1,500 high-school students selected in the ninth grade for their *unlikelihood* of proceeding to college. The city-wide Council Against Poverty had sabotaged this project in a fit of pique against the school system, withdrawing the \$5 weekly grant the students had been paid in the first years of the experiment, and the Board of Education was being unhelpful, but the students were coming along much better than would have been anticipated from their ninth-grade academic and psychological test scores. Given actual control of some schools, the university might, just possibly, have been able to bring greater numbers of “disadvantaged” students up to the minimum levels of skill required for college.

But the Board of Education was unwilling to turn over control of any school (it still is), and in 1969 circumstance outran planning. In May, a small group of black students, abetted and probably led by militants from the neighborhood, “seized” the South Campus of City College on the western edge of Harlem. They chained the

gates closed and themselves to the gates, vowing to remain in adverse possession until the Board of Higher Education met the five “demands” of the “movement.” The most important of these demands entailed a vast increase in the still small number of black and Spanish-speaking students at a college located in an exclusively black and Puerto Rican section of the city.

CONFRONTED with a court order, the demonstrators disappeared, but the situation they had dramatized did not.* “It was not only the blacks,” says Frederick L. Burkhardt, president of the American Council of Learned Societies, who was then president of the Board of Higher Education. “It was the eight-thousand-dollar-a-year whites, saying, ‘We pay our taxes. We want to go to college, and we have the right to go to college.’ It was a demand that was irresistible.” City University Vice-Chancellor Seymour Hyman, an alumnus of City College’s student body and professorate, remembers a slightly different scenario: “I got a call from Al Bowker—he was at a meeting somewhere and couldn’t leave it, and there had been a report over the radio that the Great Hall of City College had been set on fire. I went up there, and I saw the smoke pouring from the windows. We had a meeting that night, and I was telling people about what I felt when I saw that smoke coming out of that building, and the only question in my mind was, How can we save City College? And the only answer was, Hell, let everybody in. . . .”

The compromise was worked out by Robert Birnbaum, a tall, elegant young man whose manner is closer to that of the Ivy League than to that of the City University. Allen Ballard, then head of the SEEK program at City—black, a former student of Merle Fainsod’s at Harvard—was fighting for a compensatory approach and a quota for “Third-World” students (at least half of all entrants to City College). Others, politically more aware, were urging an expansion of SEEK, a sheltered college-within-a-college, rather than a quota system that would exclude “qualified” whites for the benefit of “unqualified” blacks. Birnbaum suggested that every high-school graduate be admitted to some branch of City University, even if his high-school work had

* The President of City College was then Buell Gallagher, and among his early concessions was the closing of the North Campus, where engineering students had continued to attend classes. It did not occur to Gallagher that his sympathy for those chained to his gates gave him no authority to continue spending public money on his faculty and staff (at a rate of \$40 million or so a year) while prohibiting them from performing any publicly useful functions. The then City Comptroller, Mario Procaccino, went to court for an injunction to force the Board of Higher Education to keep City College open and in business. This action later won him the Democratic mayoralty nomination, and won the rest of New York four more years of John V. Lindsay.

been in a non-academic program, but also that everyone who would previously have qualified for one of the four-year colleges be guaranteed his place, and that the freshman classes at these colleges be expanded drastically to secure a better ethnic mix.

The formula Birnbaum worked out, which has been operative starting with the high-school graduating class of June 1970, was complicated and in the end not as effective as he and the Board had hoped. Each graduating senior from the city's high schools lists in rank order the colleges he would like to attend. For each college, the computer takes the first choices, up to the numbers accepted in 1969 (or half the total for the next year, if that figure is larger), simply by running down the grade levels. This produces a cut-off grade by college, and by program within the college if the programs admit separately (as engineering and nursing do, for example). In 1972, the cut-off grade for entry to Queens College (the highest) was 85; the cut-off grade for entry to City College was 77.5. The rest of the class is filled with students who did not achieve the cut-off grade but did achieve a rank in the graduating class of their own high school matching the citywide percentage of students who *did* achieve the cut-off grade. Thus, 23 per cent of the city's graduating seniors in 1972 averaged 85 or better, so anyone in the top 23 per cent of his own high-school class, regardless of his grades, was acceptable at Queens College. Sixty per cent of the city's graduating seniors averaged 77.5 or better, so anyone in the top 60 per cent of his graduating class was taken at City College—if City was his first choice or if he had failed to get in at his first choice and City was his second choice.

In general, the community colleges take what is left, though some students who could go to four-year colleges choose to attend a community college nearer their homes (transfer from community college to senior college is now automatic if a community-college graduate wishes to continue, so a student may feel he has nothing to lose by starting off in the neighborhood); and a few of the programs at the community colleges (nursing at New York City Community College in Brooklyn, for example) are so popular that their entrance requirements are higher than those of City College.

Birnbaum's scheme required that the entering classes at all the four-year colleges be substantially expanded—doubled, potentially. And if the high-school grades meant what they seemed to mean, new courses and programs would have to be developed to give the newcomers any chance at all. What the City College protesters had demanded, after all, was not access to higher education but possession of diplomas; they were not willing to accept what they called the "revolving door" approach of the Midwest land-grant col-

leges, where a third to a half of each entering class is flunked out before the end of the freshman year.

The man charged with finding or inventing and determining the cost of these programs was David Newton, dean of Baruch College, a former City College psychology professor and a tough-minded believer in his job. He is now vice-chancellor in charge of personnel for City University, and has been handling management's end of the interminable contract negotiations with the faculty union. ("As a reward for distinguished service in setting up the Open Admissions program and starting York College in Queens," he says, "I have been sent to Vietnam.") In retrospect, Newton is less than proud of the performance of his committee: "We were given less than a year, and one of the initial cues was that we weren't properly funded. And the sense of commitment and dedication I had expected from my colleagues was nowhere to be found." But in any event, there was not much Newton and his committee could order people to do: they had no power. Each of the 18 colleges in City University is essentially autonomous, appointing its own faculty, offering its own courses, allocating the money it receives from headquarters according to its own perception of budgetary needs (except that everyone must live by the citywide union contract). Each was to make its own decisions as to the severity of the problems represented by Open Admissions, and devise its own programs accordingly. All Newton's committee could do was recommend an allocation of an extra \$400 per student for special services (over and above the \$1,700 per student that was in 1969-70 the standard budget formula), and suggest a reading of the literature of remediation (none of which is much good). "The only thing I regret," Newton says, "is our failure to spend money to research and develop new educational techniques and curricula."

"You had a faculty asked all of a sudden to do something they didn't know anything about," says Chancellor Robert Kibbee, who arrived from Pittsburgh in 1971 to find Open Admissions in existence. "Even those who thought they knew couldn't conceive how badly many of these kids were prepared. Nobody knew really what he was doing. The combination of compassion and disbelief—and people who thought it was a lousy idea—meant that the first year, and [grudgingly] the second year, were a hell of a mess. It takes a lot of time to recover from a start like that."

II

IN 1969, City University admitted a freshman class of just under 19,000; in 1970, the total was just under 35,000. At the time, a City University press release trumpeted the "fact" that the 1969 proportions had shown

only 14 per cent black and Puerto Ricans, while the 1970 entrants were 33 per cent black and Puerto Rican; subsequent investigation showed that the 1969 proportion had actually been 19.7 per cent, and the 1970 proportion was only 26.2 per cent. Of the increase of 16,000 in the number of freshmen, "others" made up 10,000; and today's visitor to remedial courses at Hunter and Baruch will find them overwhelmingly white (less so at City and, this year, at Brooklyn). All high-school seniors applying to City University in 1970 were asked to take standardized tests for diagnostic purposes. The results showed that there were a few hundred Open Admissions students who did not in fact need remedial work in English or math—and no fewer than 6,000 regularly admitted students who *did*. (An effort was made to keep the scores on this test secret, but the figures leaked to the *Times*, and since then, to avoid similar publicity, each college has been told to administer its own test, the results of which are not collated at headquarters.) It is a sobering thought that in 1970 one-quarter of the entrants to City University who had earned grades of 80 or better in the city's high schools scored below the national average for twelfth-graders on a standardized reading test.

At some colleges, efforts were made to handle the influx of unprepared students by tutoring alone. Weaker freshmen were counseled to take fewer than the usual number of courses, and urged to try music-appreciation or sociology rather than chemistry or modern language; in addition, "buddies" were assigned from the ranks of upper-classmen to offer help on an unstructured basis. At most colleges, some special remedial courses in English and math were organized. Typically, these courses did not in the first year carry college credit; but today they do, almost everywhere in the City University system (job-oriented New York City Community College and Baruch College, once the business-school division of City College, are notable exceptions).

The decision to give college credit for what is often junior-high-school work has most often been taken strictly as a result of pressure from desperately unhappy (one remedial teacher at Baruch says "demoralized") students who feel they are being asked to suffer and sweat "for nothing." But there have also been practical reasons. Hostos Community College in the Bronx, for example, has a twelve-hour-a-week "Libra" program (remedial English, black or Puerto Rican history, performing arts, and social science) for students whose reading scores fall below tenth-grade level on entrance to college. Its "unique feature," says Zane Rodriguez, the young chairman of the Hostos English Department, "is the credit-bearing remediation concept. The students can earn nine credits the first semester for the twelve hours. The Veterans' Administration, Model Cities, and

the union all require that students take twelve hours and earn nine credits to be eligible for benefits. Libra keeps them eligible."

At City College, the argument has been that the college's requirement of 128 credits for graduation is the highest in the city, and the awarding of credits for remedial courses is merely a way to bring City into line with its sister schools. At LaGuardia Community College, president Joseph Shenker takes the position that "the remedial program is part of the regular curriculum and we give credit for everything." Hunter gives only one (rather than three) credits for the lowest-level reading course; only two for the upper-level reading course. But Queens, like LaGuardia, has decided that a course is a course, and its 40 freshmen who entered in 1972 with high-school grade averages below 76 (out of an entering class of 2,600) will receive a full semester's credit for a program of Reading 1; Remedial English 01; "Contemporary Civilization" on a low reading level; and a fourth course of their own choosing (something in the art or music field is recommended).

Two of the new community colleges—Hostos, opened in 1970, and LaGuardia, opened in 1971—are operated on original principles designed in large part to help Open Admissions students, defined for community-college purposes as students whose grade average in high school is under 75 or whose preparation is in non-academic secondary programs. Such students constitute the majority of entrants at both of these colleges.

LaGuardia, located in a converted Sperry Rand factory in Long Island City, describes itself as "the first co-op community college." Its academic year is divided into four quarters, and students must commit themselves for all four (teachers work three quarters). An entering freshman takes two quarters as a full-time student, and in his third quarter the college finds him a nine-to-five job, most frequently in a retail store, a city office, a bank, or an insurance company. The public schools also hire some students, and this fall ten LaGuardia students were in Puerto Rico working as teacher aides. The employer's reports on his work at the job become part of the student's academic record; LaGuardia keeps up with his progress through visits to the job site by a liaison staff and a "practicum," a two-hour evening seminar that meets six times during the student's quarter on the job. Attendance at the "practicum" is compulsory.

In his fourth quarter, the student returns to school full-time; and in his second year he alternates quarters at school with quarters on the job (with a new "practicum" each time). Another LaGuardia innovation is an intensive week at which the student devotes full time to the study the beginning of each academic quarter during

of a single urban topic, combining instruction and field observation in an *ad hoc* mix.

The current academic year is LaGuardia's second. Out of 550 students who started just after Labor Day in 1971, 400 were still matriculated when the current year began, but attrition in the students' fifth quarter (their second on a job) seems to have been higher than the college wants to admit. Students get unhappy at the department stores, where they are often used as stock boys and girls, and at the banks, where they typically start as teller trainees. Yet the job program, in the opinion of Harry Heinemann, the dean of the cooperative education division at LaGuardia, has educational advantages for both the students and the college quite apart from the money the students earn. "For our students, an educational experience means sitting on a chair and the teacher gives assignments—that's learning. Then there's the real world, which is different. We're giving them the idea that you learn from experiences on a job. Meanwhile, we can adjust our programs to the jobs available. . . ."

It would take much more time than I could spend at LaGuardia to form even a vague opinion about the chances for success of so new a program; the one "practicum" I attended was an infuriating disaster. About 70 per cent of the staff at LaGuardia are experienced college teachers; the rest come from high schools. Remediation involves course work plus "study labs" with standard remedial materials. On one level at least, the cooperative program has been a measurable success—jobs were in fact found for everybody the first two times around. This spring, however, LaGuardia will need no fewer than 650 thirteen-week jobs for its students, and may not be able to find them. Shenker crosses his bridges one at a time.

Hostos represents an intellectually more radical venture than LaGuardia in adapting higher education to special needs. City University headquarters speaks of it as a college using programmed instruction and computer-assisted instruction as major elements, but in fact students are using neither programs nor computers. President Candido de Leon, a man in his late forties but much younger in appearance, developed the basic Hostos approach while working at the Board of Higher Education. (De Leon did not start the college himself; he was called back from sabbatical to rescue it after a disastrous first year.) The approach seeks to determine "performance objectives" for groups of brief "modules" which taken together constitute a course. Each module ends in a "milestone," an examination the student takes when he or she feels ready for it, at a separate testing center. Some of the descriptions of these courses, as they appear in the catalogue, are pretty sorry stuff: Sociology 1231, for example, carrying three credits

—"The student will be able to define or recognize [emphasis added] terms related to social mobility, role, status, race prejudice, and factors leading to social change." And the tests given are nearly all teacher-tests administered when the teacher thinks the class should be ready—in standard academic style.

Hostos is located in a wretchedly crowded former factory loft in the Bronx; nearly 90 per cent of its students are Open Admissions students by the under-75 grade-level definition. They are older on the average than students at most of the colleges. Many are primarily Spanish-speaking, and 70 of the college's 150 courses are offered in Spanish as well as in English. "The first-year students," de Leon says wearily, "were given the impression they could complete the entire program in Spanish. That was not my idea—they must have an intensive English program in case they wish to transfer; to tell them anything else would be irresponsible." The career emphasis at Hostos is on health services; de Leon is still appalled by his predecessor's notion that people could work effectively in responsible jobs in New York City hospitals without a good reading knowledge of English.

Probably because of de Leon, there are people of unusual distinction on the Hostos faculty. Among the mathematics professors is Mariano Garcia, a smiling white-haired man who was chairman of the mathematics department at the University of Puerto Rico, has written a Spanish-English math dictionary, and teaches in both languages. Lois Lamdrin, who supervises the English end of Hostos's *Libra* program, taught at Pittsburgh's Carnegie-Mellon before she came to New York. "When I started," she says, "I had all the white liberal biases about what these students could achieve if given complete freedom. We all lost those." Quite apart from questions of "performance objectives," which still bedevil all those in the non-science and non-vocational areas at Hostos, work in English is now pretty thoroughly structured, with assignments like writing descriptions of photographs supplied by the instructor, and vocabulary lessons like one relating to the five senses.

Most of what happens at Hostos is clearly not college work, but some of it is. Students in a recorder class (learning musical staff notation for college credit!) are carrying books which include *Four Ibsen Plays*, Bone's *Freshman Calculus*, and Broom & Selznick's *Principles of Sociology*. Almost inevitably, the college can show one really spectacular success: a Puerto Rican girl who got through the two-year program in one year, then went on to Queens College and got through her last two years of college in one year, and now is back at Hostos teaching while doing graduate work. Equally inevitably, the records are littered with failure; and the great majority of those who graduate are simply not ready for

the third year of a senior college, to which they gain automatic entrance on presentation of the Hostos degree. Still, I for one will remember the hush that fell on Mariano Garcia's math class as he came to something his class found difficult but Professor Garcia said they had to know.

AT BARUCH, some of the remedial work in English is tied directly to course work in other subjects. (Similar procedures are apparently employed at Bronx Community College.) The remedial teachers, mostly former high-school (and junior-high) teachers, are separate from the rest of the faculty; most of the professors have taken the position that the Open Admissions students will have to get through the same courses everybody else gets through. ("Their expectations of what college freshmen should be able to do are way high," says one of the remedial teachers, forgetting that these expectations derive from experience with regularly admitted students; one of the strengths, and dangers, of good remedial teachers is that they become strong partisans of their students.) So the remedial staff, now isolated in a freshmen-only annex where a high school used to be, schemes and works to get the Open Admissions students through the courses.

The device used is a "study lab," which gathers together as many as possible of the students with reading problems who are taking a given course. The teacher goes over the textbook for this course with groups of perhaps a dozen students, outlining the ideas and reinforcing the vocabulary, sometimes helping with papers and with the spotting of items likely to be on future exams. Many Baruch professors are less than enthusiastic about this procedure—"They're afraid you're touching their subject matter," says Stephen Urkowitz, an earnest young man who started in the Baruch remedial staff part-time while working toward his Ph.D. in English literature, and has chosen to identify with the remedial teachers rather than with the English Department. Still, the fact is that Baruch Open Admissions students in some numbers are getting through the same courses that the best of the regularly admitted students are taking, and this is not happening at many colleges in City University.

Dean Ballard, who should know, says that "the best programs in English are kind of uniform." Last spring, more than 600 teachers working in English remediation at City University met at the Hotel Commodore for a two-day weekend conference which presumably should have spread the word about any original or especially successful program. Hunter has gone in for a "sector analysis" approach, derived from linguistics, for the teaching of writing skills; Brooklyn College is reputed to have a "bidialectal" program for black students whose spoken English diverges

drastically from standard English.* But so far there have been no breakthroughs, no techniques that can be transferred down to the high schools, and the New York City high schools continue to deteriorate.

The failures of both student and program are often distressing to watch. Nearly three months into the academic year, a group at Hunter was offered a lecture in how to use the library, essentially an introduction to the arcana of the Dewey decimal system, which is part of the fifth-grade curriculum. The librarian asked how many of the class of fifteen had used the library yet, and was rewarded by one rather tentatively raised hand, by a girl who said that she hadn't actually *used* it, but she worked at the library part-time. With the arrival of the first Open Admissions transfers from community colleges to the four-year colleges, professors in upper-level courses are meeting utterly intractable problems of sheer bewilderment in their students. "They've been

* A visit to this Ford-funded operation was entirely unproductive. Its operators first wanted me to understand that the *Times* had made a lot of unnecessary trouble for them by saying that they stressed the validity of Black English, when really what they were stressing was "giving the students standard English rhetorical style, to help them pass courses."

"Of course. What do you give the students to do?"

"We're adapting an English-as-a-second-language approach."

"Fine. What do the students do?"

"The students who tend to have the problems are those who have been turned off by the cultural identifications of standard English. The way we have taught them in the past has not taken account of what they come into the classroom with."

"Yes. But what do you then ask them to do?"

"You look at what the student brings with him. You have to get rid of those attitudes he has, that he's been making random errors. You make the student aware, get him to see that when he makes this mistake it's nothing to be ashamed of. His language is in conflict with the standard language."

"All right. What do you do to make him aware?"

"What we do is focus on the dialect grammar, systematically. Where the grammars conflict and where they don't conflict. Opens up a whole new world for them—they're not intimidated by the English class again. And we're doing this with these students at a time when they're becoming very conscious of their own identity. That adds tremendously to their motivation to learn."

"Sure. What materials do you use?"

"We're developing our own book."

"May I see some of it?"

"No. We've had too many bad experiences with people coming in and picking up our ideas and using them to get foundation grants of their own."

"May I sit in on a class?"

"No. I don't want to talk to you any more. You're patronizing and hostile. . . ."

"[departing] . . . If you have something you are doing with these students that is genuinely helpful to them, you have an obligation to trumpet it to the world, not hide it."

Then, with that mixture of rage and despair unique to this problem: "We'll trumpet it when we've got it. *You can't trumpet something that doesn't exist yet.*"

This project is now in its third year, and the people running it are intelligent. What is to be done?

getting A's," said one, "and they're devastated when I have to give them D's. Now what I do is show them an A paper, and they're honest about it: they say, 'I just can't do *that*.' But I'm not sure what good it does them." At City College, where the administration has forbidden the imposition of prerequisites, a larger than usual proportion of the faculty has been making contact with truly hopeless students, and have not the vaguest notion what they are supposed to do about it.

VICE-CHANCELLOR HYMAN speaks approvingly of "compensatory courses," intermediate between remedial and regular: "English 1, say, meets six times instead of three times a week, and for twice the time and effort the student gets the usual three credits." Tom Carroll, assistant dean of the faculty at the New York City Community College, warns against this approach on the basis of advice from California, where he visited junior-college faculty who had been living with Open Admissions for a long time. "They all told me," he says, "that if you attach a remedial course to a regular course the whole course becomes remedial." What can be said for certain is that the most publicized (and interesting) such venture, Chemistry 5-6-7 at City College, can claim only very mixed results.

Chem 5 is the brainchild of Abraham Mazur, who has been at City for more than forty years, as a student and then as a professor, and who was chairman of the Chemistry Department when Open Admissions came about. Mazur's thesis was that Open Admissions students would be able to master the normal two-term first-year chemistry course if given three terms to do so, and that they would want to take such a course even though they could get only two-thirds credit for each semester's work. "Even the kid who was the worst prepared in high school," Mazur says, "who did badly and knew it, has the same ambition as the Jewish middle-class kid: he wants to be a doctor." The second part of the argument has proved entirely correct: enrollment in the first semester of Chem 5 has been high every term. But the first part is wrong: the students are in much worse shape, especially in mathematics, than Mazur had imagined. "I have identified kids," he says sadly, "who don't know that 373 over 273 is greater than one."

Of the 73 students who enrolled in the first semester in Chem 5, only four survived to enter the third semester—which is where college-level work begins. "By the spring of 1971," Mazur recalls, "it was clear we were facing a disaster." At a time when City College was removing *all* prerequisites to courses in the humanities and social sciences, Mazur arranged with the math department for an elementary algebra and remedial-arithmetic course that would henceforward be a

prerequisite for students in Chem 5. By 1972-73, City College was giving full credit for each of the three semesters of Mazur's course (i.e., instead of working three semesters for two semesters' credit, the unprepared student now gets nine credits for—ideally—the same work that earns the prepared student only six credits). Mazur also convinced the nursing department that the first two semesters of his course should be enough to meet nurses' requirements in chemistry, and enrollment in Chem 5 mounted to 190 in fall 1972. But in the third semester of the course there were still only seventeen students, from an entry of 120 two terms before. And the first semester, which is all that most students enrolling in the course actually complete, is described by Mazur as "junior-high-school general science." It is in fact a little better than that—Boyle's Law, which I watched being taught to a rather unreceptive class, is not in most junior-high programs—but it isn't much better.

Ivo Duchacek's course on Political Ideas and Issues, offered only to Open Admissions students at City, is probably more demanding. Duchacek is a white-haired Czech refugee whose scholarly concern has been with the fate of his motherland, and he is not teaching for the purpose of radicalizing his students. (He is also not teaching the course for gain: he has donated it to City College, over and above his normal load.) Two English instructors work with him on the problems of 27 students: they attend his classes and he attends theirs. All students are asked to read brief excerpts from material of some significance (mostly modern). The assignments are imaginative: in one, for example, Duchacek presents paragraphs by Fanon, Mao, Chiang, and Touré, and asks his students to write two sentences—"just two"—answering the question, "What anxiety is common to all these men?" Of the current group of 27 students, Duchacek feels he may have some chance with 22: "I'm really pleased with them—the only thing is, their English is awful." There were 70-odd in a similar class last year, and Duchacek reports that when he took over Professor Hans J. Morgenthau's work for a month this fall he found five former Open Admissions remedial students in Morgenthau's European theory course. "I watched them carefully and listened to their questions, and no doubt about it, they are 'in.'"

Elsewhere, courses with names like Political or Urban Ideas and Issues are likely to be taught by instructors who feel humble before their illiterate Third-World students, to whom they believe will fall the honor of making the Revolution. Some of these courses lie below junior-high level: Hunter's first course in urban studies, for instance, sends students out on field trips to make color slides they will later screen for the class (rock music playing on a cassette as they go, to make the presentation multimedia). This

is fourth-grade show-and-tell. "The course culminates," said one of its young teachers, "in change strategies—the whole idea of change." Even this stuff has its defenders. "Rhetoric," says Hans Spiegel, who set up the course, "is the first important rung up the abstraction ladder." But college is late in the game for a first step toward abstraction.

As for black-studies courses, many of these are doubtless "revolutionary" in tone; neither time nor patience permitted an investigation, and anyway, access is usually by invitation only. At both City and Hunter, and perhaps elsewhere, there is pressure to permit black and Spanish-speaking students to take all or nearly all their courses in a black-studies or Puerto-Rican studies department. This is not the place to hash over once again the pros and cons of such departments: clearly, there is a need for a black perspective in all social and historical studies; equally clearly, black-studies departments often become shelters for untalented students, and in education as in the economy, protective tariffs typically lead to overpriced and shoddy goods.

III

IN an article in *City Almanac* last summer, Joe L. Rempson of Bronx Community College projected "attrition rates" of 60 to 70 per cent for Open Admissions students in the senior colleges, 70 to 80 per cent for Open Admissions students in the junior colleges. Rempson considered these figures "astonishing"—and indeed they are, though not in the sense Rempson intended; for the evidence of their previous schoolwork would have argued that virtually *none* of these students could handle a full program of higher education without kinds and degrees of help beyond what CUNY has provided. Until the fall of 1972, when Manhattan and Queensborough Community Colleges wielded a small ax, no Open Admissions students were flunked out anywhere in the City University system, and the 50 per cent or so who left during the first two years did so on their own.

A substantial proportion of those who leave the colleges do so for economic reasons: many are from fearfully poor families, and find \$1.40 a day in carfare a heavy burden to carry. But there is no question among either supporters or opponents of Open Admissions that a considerable majority of the survivors are doing badly. They are mostly dull students, and they sit as dull students will in a class, wrapped in an invisible blanket that protects them from all the things they do not dare. For what the observation is worth, the black and Puerto Rican students seem on the average more alert: the counselors' typical statement that "test scores do not really predict performance for black students" is not just propaganda for the cause. Still, most of

the black and Puerto Rican students accepted under Open Admissions are doing badly, too.

What constitutes "success" for the Open Admissions venture is an impossible question to answer. When the doors first opened to the freshmen of 1970, Vice-Chancellor Timothy S. Healy told *Time* magazine that if "20 per cent of these kids get a degree, that's 20 per cent above zero." Recently Mrs. Jacqueline Wexler, president of Hunter College, commented that "if we can move 25 per cent of these kids it would be the greatest thing in the history of New York." No one (except, unfortunately, the students themselves) expects Open Admissions entrants to complete their degree work in four years: conventionally admitted freshmen at City University, and their peers in the country's other urban colleges, average little short of three years for an A.A., six years for an A.B. The final figures are thus a long time away. And it should be remembered that the 75 per cent who do not complete the course are not necessarily losers. "The *institution* may want them to get a degree," says Harry Heinemann of the cooperative education program at LaGuardia Community, "but if they take thirty hours and that gets them a job they like, they haven't failed—they've succeeded."

On the other hand, what defines *failure* for Open Admissions is an easy question to answer: it is a decline in the respect accorded to a diploma from a branch of City University. "If we move 60 per cent of these kids through social promotion," says Mrs. Wexler, using an elementary-school term of art, "it will be a disaster for the city. Unless the city can be got to see that, we will be doing a terrible disservice."

City headquarters has begun judging the colleges by the numbers of credits Open Admission students receive—and the students themselves, of course, have been learning from the grapevine about teachers who pass everybody. With the elimination of all degree requirements other than numbers and the removal of prerequisites from all courses at places like City College, the chance to collect empty credits has been multiplied, and so has the chance to collect empty diplomas. The losers will be not only the regular students, but also that fraction of the Open Admissions students who in fact complete a valid college program at what Vice-Chancellor Hyman calls "some level of acceptability." Marvin Schick, a former Hunter political-science professor who is liaison between the Mayor's office and CUNY, points out that "many state universities, including some famous ones, were giving diplomas for very low qualities of work for years, and the country was none the worse for it." But the fact is that high-school diplomas are being given today in New York for work below anything that would be considered acceptable outside big cities, and it is hard to see why City University will not follow the same path.

The pressures City University must resist are not just political. Open Admissions has turned most of the campuses into enclosures crowded to the limits of endurance. Four-year colleges in the State University system outside the city average about 205 "gross square feet" per student, excluding residential space; City University four-year colleges in fall 1971 averaged 86 "gross square feet" per student. (The opening of new buildings at CCNY and Brooklyn improved this figure to 97 GSF in 1972, but better than that it will not be in this decade.) It is not uncommon to see students sitting on the floor in the hallways, getting some work done between classes; at Hunter College during class breaks the elevators are as jammed as a rush-hour subway car. The atmosphere is uncivilized, denying all those values beyond course work which a college is supposed to inculcate.

One of the greatest threats to the quality of the diplomas may come from the growth of a central City University bureaucracy that will, like all bureaucracies, seek neat answers to difficult questions. Already some of the resemblances to the Board of Education are startling and frightening. (When I called and told the secretary of a vice-chancellor that I was writing an article about Open Admissions and wished to see her boss, she said sweetly, "You want his permission to write the article?") A central task force is now at work on the problem of continuing racial imbalance among the campuses, and it will probably recommend a "comprehensive school" solution, with everyone to take the first two years at two-year colleges. "That," says Mrs. Wexler, "would *really* be the destruction of the city." But it may happen.

THOUGH the numbers of able students entering the city colleges have not dropped seriously, the proportion of able students a professor encounters during his day is down considerably; and at some of the branches, notably City College, it seems possible that the tipping point has been passed. This is a grievous worry. "The performance of a given staff," says City's Abraham Mazur, "will depend on the presence of a certain number of really good students. It's happened to me—I put out more, I'm more creative, when I have really good students. We felt the difference here when the cut-off dropped from 85 to 82 back in the 1950's, and now. . . . If it weren't for the Chinese we'd be in trouble already."

"I can't fault the faculty for the psychological problem they obviously face," says Chancellor Kibbee. "It's much more fun to confront the student at something like your intellectual level. If I'd been a professor at CCNY for ten or fifteen years, I'd wonder whether all this was worth it. If you start at some teachers' college in western Pennsylvania and work your way up to Yale it's

very different from starting at Yale and winding up at a teachers' college in western Pennsylvania—even if you get a bigger title and a bigger salary."

Even the carefully-maintained facade of official optimism about Open Admissions has developed serious cracks. Explaining the failure of his planning committee to give people anything of substance to do with the newcomers, David Newton says, "Does a college belong in the remedial business? No. But I figured we could carry it for five or ten years without seriously damaging our educational function, and by then the high schools would be repaired. . . ." Vice-Chancellor Hyman worries that "the soft areas are heavily oversubscribed, and increasingly so. Things like sociology. It seems to be an easy curriculum: people feel that all you have to be is sufficiently verbal and you can survive it." The integrity of the diploma, Hyman says, "involves reliance on the professional integrity of the professor." That's an awfully weak reed in an age when administrators demand results and so many professors have lost their nerve without losing their vanity.

"There's no real way you can maintain the standards of the diploma from this office," says Chancellor Kibbee, adding that while he would consider the graduation of 30 per cent of the first Open Admissions group "a qualified success," he would then "like to make it 40 per cent." To the extent that the pressure from headquarters is to give more and more credits and more and more diplomas, the deck is stacked against those in the faculties who care about what the diploma certifies. Nothing is more disturbing in this connection than CUNY's expressed desire to load the private colleges with the same problems, and the same pressures to award unearned degrees. Thus, major efforts will be made in the state legislature in the next few years to develop grant mechanisms to lure financially pressed NYU and Columbia and the city's other private colleges into taking on large numbers of unprepared students. Vice-Chancellor Timothy Healy says, "So long as Open Admissions is solely in the public sector, it will merely substitute the question of *where* did you go to college for the question of *did* you go to college." But surely the question would not arise in this form if CUNY maintained the quality of its diploma.

Yet when all one's outrage at these attitudes has been expended, it remains true that what is most objectionable in the promotion of Open Admissions is merely a natural outgrowth of the abuse of educational credentials by employers and, indeed, by the public at large. The students at LaGuardia Community College are entirely right in their argument that one does not need a college education to be a bank teller, but as the supply of college graduates increases, the banks will certainly begin to demand an A. B.

from all candidates for such positions. When there was a shortage of engineers in this country, employers happily imported English "engineers" who had been through a year or two of post-secondary training—but they would not hire Americans with less than a B.S. The "nursing profession" has now succeeded in imposing an A.B. prerequisite on future nurses in New York State. Many of our best airline captains are alumni of high school and the World War II air force, but now neither the airlines nor the air force will accept for pilot training anyone who does not have a bachelor's degree. One can easily foresee a future in which policemen, factory foremen, barbers, morticians, apartment-house janitors, TV repairmen will be required to show possession of a baccalaureate.

DESPITE many gloomy forecasts, America need never worry about a large class of unemployed college graduates: the system is rigged so that demand must grow to meet the available supply. What will happen to the colleges in the process is visible in the current plight of the high schools. But higher education today is intellectually defenseless against the insistence on ever-expanding enrollments, and ever-easier degrees. "The American university," Reck Niebuhr of Temple once said, "has failed to *conceptualize* its manpower function." And in the meanwhile it has become saddled with a function it cannot perform.

There are more false gods here than one can shake a stick at. Education is inherently a promoter of inequality. The musically talented and the tone deaf play the fiddle equally well in a community where there is no violin teacher; once instruction begins, a gap develops. Very nearly the only operational truth ever demonstrated in education is that something must be worth doing if the results of the work show some improvement for everybody and a widening of the gap between the best and the poorest. The better the training the more salient the revealed differences in natural ability; only academicians who live in the literature of their subject rather than in their experience could even imagine education as a promoter of equality. More strikingly for individuals than for groups (as Christopher Jencks has so wearisomely pointed out), education can open opportunities that would be closed in its absence. But its necessary social function in a complex modern society must be to raise the general floor under performance and

understanding, not to reduce the distance between the floor and the ceiling.

Though I know many brilliant people I would not care to have as my doctor or my lawyer or my children's teacher, it is undoubtedly true that a unidimensional measure of academic excellence can be used to set a special, higher floor for many occupations and professions. The ardently egalitarian researchers of the American Council on Education are fundamentally unconvincing: one can dismiss them with the curse that they should cross the river on a bridge designed by an engineer from an engineering school where students were admitted by lottery; and that their injuries should then be treated by a doctor from a medical school where students were admitted by lottery; and that their heirs' malpractice suit should then be tried by a lawyer from a law school where students were admitted by lottery. The problems even of affluent America are not primarily distributive—it still makes an immense, perhaps even a growing, difference who does how well a large number of highly skilled and difficult jobs. But that number is already much smaller than the number of college-trained workers, and it is surely appropriate to wonder what social function is served by maintaining high "standards" for credentials that then grant exclusive access to jobs that can be done just as well by people who have not achieved such standards.

The Open Admissions students deserve better than that: despite all the media images, they are in overwhelming proportion grave, earnest, desperately hardworking, and insecure. It is not their fault that they must make their rites of passage to adulthood in a society that values not education itself—let alone learning—but the institutional evidence that education has occurred. They are not very bright, most of them, but their perception of their social situation is correct.

No doubt college does civilize some who were merely acculturated by elementary and secondary education. Higher education for those who wish to understand better and enjoy more profoundly should always be "open," voluntary on both sides. But these are not the drives that can (or will) fill City University (or combine to finance it at a rate of nearly half a billion dollars a year). What is beating at all the universities—but especially at CUNY—is involuntary education on the tertiary level, the forced prolongation of an outworn adolescence for purposes that are quite separate from the civilizing Idea of a university.

A Memoir of Sinai

Edward Grossman

ABU RODEIS—August 1, 1968.
Last night I slept on a folding cot in the Kantara Customs House, not far from the Suez Canal. This morning I got up at dawn to catch a ride with an army convoy to this place, about two hundred kilometers due south on the Gulf of Suez, where my cousin Mendel is stationed.

* * *

Most young native Israeli Jews are named after martial and ethical heroes of the Bible, or have made-up names out of the Hebrew dictionary, like my own given name. In contrast, Mendel is saddled with a name out of the dead East European Diaspora. I assume it has caused him his share of chagrin. It is a burden, for not only is it odd, but it means that he commemorates in the flesh the memory of a man of whom nothing remains, not even a photograph. This was my uncle's father, my mother's father, my grandfather. My uncle has told me that Mendel is turning out to look something like his namesake. That may be, but what I note right away is that he takes after my aunt, in her handsome, happier days, before the kibbutz took its toll.

I haven't laid eyes on my cousin since the last time I was in Israel, three years ago. Then he was a gangly, somewhat unprepossessing teenager—his Adam's apple protruded. In the interval he has put on brawn. He looks dark and fit and sympathetic in his uniform, and accepting my aunt's cookies the delivery of which it was my mission to accomplish, he embraces me and makes me welcome. I can stay as long as I like, he says. Although he is in the officer candidate school here, he has several free days each week. Do I want to go down to Sharm el Sheikh? We can skin-dive there and enjoy the extraordinary marine life.

We keep looking at each other curiously as he shows me to my quarters in the civilian sector of the base. He remarks that I don't seem to be

fazed too much by the sun, for an American, and I remind him that I am a Sabra, native-born, just as he is. The sun, at midmorning, is murder. "I forgot," he says, smiling. He is a kibbutznik from birth, one of the "New Jews," but contrary to the findings of anthropologists who have made close studies of such communally-reared children, there is no lack of affect in him, at least not toward me. With a flourish, he permits me passage through the screen door of the villa in which I will be staying.

"Villa" is local usage. The single-story concrete barrack is one of a group of identical structures forming a compound surrounded by concertinas of barbed wire. This housing, Mendel explains, was constructed specially for the Italian and Yugoslav engineers whom the Egyptians brought in to find the oil and sink the wells. The "villas" are luxuriously equipped with running water, electricity, and screens, and I have the choice of any bunk and mattress, for the place Mendel has brought me to is vacant. The outhouse is over there, at that trench, Mendel indicates as he drives me in a jeep back to the military camp. We eat lunch (cucumber-salad sandwiches and Tempo soda pop) in a noisy mess hall with girl and boy soldiers at long flyspecked tables. Mendel is in a hurry. Late for a lecture, he gulps his food and drink, grabs a notebook, leaving me to my own devices.

* * *

August 2

This seems to be a combination Klondike boom town, frontier kibbutz, and manned station on the surface of the moon. I'll stay here a day or two.

* * *

August 4

THE Bedouin who have an encampment nearby shoo their goats off the airstrip when they hear the droning of the daily DC-3. The incoming flight appears every morning from behind a ridge in the east, circles around over the water, and makes a precipitous, bumpy landing. In the afternoon, there is an outgoing

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flight by the same plane. So far, that's the only air traffic I've noticed. The last couple of mornings I have walked in the direction of the strip after breakfast to attend this little ritual and to watch the colors change before the heat and the flies become intolerable. The grimy, grinning Bedouin leave me alone once I have convinced them that I am not interested in the seashells they try to sell as a sideline.

The loudest noise, then, around the airstrip after the plane has landed and its crew and passengers have departed in jeeps, is of the goats munching at clumps of prickly scrub. The sun has come up over the closest ridge. It is still low enough, however, so that every object throws a shadow many times its size—the goats, myself, pebbles in the ground. Colors change every five minutes. The sky, from pink, to pearl, to blue. The water of the Gulf of Suez, from lead-gray to deep blue. The hills across the Gulf, from black to gray to brown, a brightly-lit brown relief map in which every detail, ridge, and contour, miles distant, stands out as soon as the sun climbs and its light falls on Africa direct. I have scanned the face of the opposite continent through binoculars I borrowed from Mendel. It appears uninhabited, lunar. In the late afternoon, the light falls the other way. Then the Sinai hills and mountains are similarly detailed, while those in Africa blur and merge and become a jagged silhouette reflecting the rose and purple colors that flash for minutes at a time across the sky, and the water, as the sun sets.

I leave the airstrip when the flies discover me. By this time, the freshness has gone from the bone-dry air, the first act of the color-show has ended. By midday there will be no colors at all: just a white glare that fills the sky and consumes everything under it, compared to which the midday light in Jerusalem—that I thought was hard—is temperate, beneficial. Wearing a kibbutznik "idiot's cap," I walk back to the base. I take a celery sandwich and a Tempo in the mess-hall, and then retire to my bunk to give an ear to the melodies of the Voice of Cairo, to read and doze. The radio is Mendel's, an old plug-in Phillips. Outside, the temperature will reach 115° Fahrenheit. A dry heat, not muggy, as in Tel Aviv.

WHEN the heat is turned on all the way, activity at Abu Rodeis diminishes but doesn't stop entirely. The civilian geologists and engineers pull up in their Land Rovers in a compound separate from the one I am in and retreat to air-conditioned trailers. The propane cooling devices make a noise like idling motors. There are also a couple of oil rigs right in the camp, which never stop sucking the stuff out of the ground, clanking so monotonously night and day that this noise, too, is absorbed into silence by the heat. Flies bump languidly against the screens. From the shelter of my barrack, I can see no hu-

man movement. Mendel, I know has lectures; these are indoors.

But more goes on, even under the sun when it is at its highest, than I first assume. Half-asleep on my bunk, narcotized by the furnace-like atmosphere and the Arabic singing, I become aware of a new sound: a thud and then a crunch in the distance, at irregular intervals. I get up and stand by the screen door. They are practicing on the artillery range. Yesterday, at about the same time, I heard crackling that was probably small-arms fire.

I must go out into the fiercest heat of the day to use the latrine. I make the trek in the blinding glare, relieve myself over the trench with its gagging smell of lime, teeming flies, and convenient stack of Mickey Mouse comic books in Arabic. This wooden shack is a horror, but at least it affords some shade. I dally there a moment, breathing through my mouth and bracing myself for the sun. On the way back, I meet a small group of marching soldiers. Their rifle butts clank against their canteens, boots scrape the soft asphalt; no one speaks.

More than half of the troops here come from kibbutzim, Mendel says. He doesn't know whether this is the result of official policy, but I think it must be, since kibbutzniks make up an insignificant fraction of the Israeli population at large.

The young kibbutzniks are better suited to this life than the city-bred soldiers, or the immigrants. They behave as if they were at home. Girls from the city, for example, don't ordinarily go around in khaki blouses, khaki shorts, and sandals or shit-kickers. That is the constant costume of the girls and boys on the base, however, and most of the girls move as if they have seldom worn anything else.

Of the army people, almost everyone, with the exception of the senior officers, looks to be under twenty-five; that means almost everyone is at least a couple years younger than I am. The civilians are older, from what I have seen of them, which has not been much. I understand they are working for a government-subsidized company. They are supposed to be searching for more oil and jacking up the efficiency of the existing wells. Usually they keep to themselves. They have their own mess, and the only occasion at which I have seen them mix with the troops is when a movie is shown.

Social life copies aspects of life on the kibbutz: the same routine of dutifulness, the egalitarian ways, the communal eating, probably gossip and a certain lack of privacy, the evening hours of scheduled recreation for those who are not dead-tired, but all this enhanced, revived, or maybe travestied, by the youthfulness of the population, the ever-present guns and tanks, and the spectacular setting in nature.

Into this strange little society in the wilderness I have come, and have been neither accepted nor

rejected. Some of them know I am Mendel's cousin, and greet me casually. Others ignore me, not out of hostility, I believe, but as they might ignore each other, through familiarity. During the worst hours of the heat, I have been keeping to my bunk, and in the early morning and late afternoon I walk around and see the sights, maybe trying to pass the time of day with this one or that one. In the evening, I unobtrusively eavesdrop on conversations, arguments. It is possible that I am not such an odd addition to the scene.

* * *

ALTERCATION between a girl soldier and a couple of her male comrades, privates first-class like herself, over a proposed visit to the famous Sinai monastery of St. Katharine's.

Girl: "But why *can't* I go, if I want to?"

First Boy: "The monks won't have it, that's why."

Girl: "It's unfair! It's not normal!"

First Boy: "We must respect their religious beliefs."

Girl: "Izzatso? Well, what about in Israel, when the religious discriminate against everybody, and tell everybody do this, don't do that? I guess we have to respect *their* beliefs too, huh?"

First Boy: "That's not the same thing. I'm against that."

Girl: "Could you kindly tell me what the difference is? It's not clear to me."

First Boy: "Well . . ."

Second Boy: "The difference is, one, these are Gentiles, not Jews, and two, we are the occupying power here. We shouldn't step on their toes if we can help it."

Girl: "Amnon, have you ever thought of going into the diplomatic service?"

First Boy: "Yeah, that's right. That's the difference."

Second Boy: "If we behave ourselves, maybe they'll spontaneously suggest that a woman or two would be OK."

Girl: "Yeah, if she doesn't sleep over."

This girl—muscular, blonde—like many Israeli girls manages to combine a whining tone with twice as many words per minute. In France, too, the young women speak faster than anyone.

"Ha! Do you think I care?" she concludes. "Let them meditate in peace."

* * *

To allay boredom, and the anxiety that I feel whenever I have nothing to read, to help kill the time between eleven in the morning and three in the afternoon, I have been lying on my bunk and rationing myself to a chapter a day from a book called *Yesterday and To-day in Sinai*, written by a Major C. S. Jarvis and published in London in 1931. I found this book under some

trash in a corner of the barracks. It is in poor condition, with pages and illustrations ripped out; in spite of this, I am grateful that it has come my way.

"To my wife," Major Jarvis says in the dedication facing the title page,

WHO HAS ASSISTED ME WITH THIS BOOK,
AND WHO HAS HELPED ME TO SEE
THE HUMOROUS SIDE OF A
LONELY LIFE THAT IS NOT
ALWAYS AMUSING

Jarvis was governor of Sinai following the First World War, after the Peninsula had been taken away from the Turks by Allenby's army. The Major was responsible for law and order and modernization from the Canal to the border of the Palestine Mandate. In effect, he seems to have been the unofficial king of Sinai, acclaimed by the Bedouin Arabs. He dispensed justice, distributed wheat, made tours of inspection, received tributes and honors. He writes with a recurrent sense of irony—conscious or unconscious, I can't quite tell—at being the representative in this God-forsaken spot of an empire that is soon going to disintegrate, but is still proud of itself, has a lot of spunk left, can put on a good show. I like the Major. He is paternalistic and a racist, but that is not so important as the fact that he can make me laugh, and that he took the trouble to learn something about the demography, history, archaeology, wildlife, etc. of the territory under his supervision.

To begin with, Jarvis rejects the term "desert" for the Sinai—at least for all but its southernmost extremity of granite mountain ranges. According to him, the definition of a desert is "a place devoid of water and vegetation." But recent surveys show there is water, in addition to the numerous oases, and the archaeological evidence proves there were civilizations here once. Therefore "the correct designation (for most of the Sinai) is a wilderness, lacking chiefly a virile and hard-working population to make it, if not exactly a garden, a much more attractive place than it is at present."

Jarvis doesn't believe that the people he has been living among and has gotten to know have it in them to undertake this transformation: "Perhaps the most marked characteristic of the Sinai Arab is his absolute loathing of work in any form." Jarvis puts down the typical adult as a cunningly ingratiating loafer who will exert himself physically only to abuse his wives or pursue a feud or lawsuit. However, if a young Arab boy can be rescued from his people soon enough, and trained to serve as a British civil servant up at El Arish or in the camel constabulary, the outcome can be quite different, for

The Arabs of Sinai are absolutely ignorant and uneducated, but this does not mean that they are brainless. I have always held the view that the average Arab is born into this world with a

very good brain, but that it becomes atrophied by disuse.

In the dry, still heat, I laugh out loud, and remember that the history books say that in 1903, the British colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, toyed with the idea of giving some land around El Arish to the Zionists. Herzl was excited and enthusiastic, but the delegates of the pogromized masses in Russia, who were the heart of the Zionist movement, wouldn't hear of anything but the real Land of Israel. In any case, no more came of the El Arish scheme than of Birobidjan, Argentina, or Uganda.

It's true, Jarvis concedes, that as between the nomadic Bedouin, on the one hand, and the fellahin of the Delta and the French- and English-speaking merchants and educated classes of the towns of Egypt and the Levant (whom Jarvis is prepared to commend for their hard-working and cultured qualities, respectively), a distinction should be drawn. I remember T. E. Lawrence says the same thing. Yet like Lawrence, Jarvis finally gives the impression that all differences and similarities aside, it is the nomads who are the pure, true Arabs, and what he has learned about them he can pass on to his readers as a dose of the facts about an entire people which has lately been much in the news.

The truth of the matter is that the Arab is not a first-class fighting man; this may be due to the fact that his natural repugnance to discipline causes lack of cohesion and there is nothing to hold a force together once the enemy have administered a check. . . . The Arab, therefore, like the Irishman, is credited with qualities he does not possess.

Yet:

With all his faults there are certain attractive qualities about the Arab . . . that make him irresistible to a certain type of Englishman . . . such Englishmen are apt to take the Arab too seriously—far more seriously than the Arab takes himself—and in course of time to become so imbued with the Arab cause, whatever that may be, that they are willing to sacrifice their lives for it; and this is far more than the average Arab would do himself.

So what? Isn't this far more than any man in his right mind would do? Stretched out on my bunk, in the heat, I can't imagine myself choosing to die for a cause. Is this a failure of the imagination? Or does it just signify that I'm a coward, who hasn't changed since I used to run away from the Irish kids who wanted to fight, back in Roxbury? Would Jarvis say that the half-million or so British soldiers who were slaughtered, maimed, and gassed in one offensive during the "Great War"—the "Great War" is the prime historical event in Jarvis's experience—would he say they were man enough to sacrifice themselves for a cause?

But obviously I'm being unfair—stupid, even. Isn't Jarvis ironical, a skeptic? And, in the context of these questions, it is painful for me to remember how frantically I tried to escape from the safety of America, at precisely the time that the big war was exploding here last year.

* * *

On Arab "psychology," Jarvis repeats a lot of what Lawrence said in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Jarvis is less poetic, more amusing. This sort of humor is good for a limited number of laughs. In the midday heat, even laughing takes something out of you.

* * *

LATE afternoon. A demonstration in the field for colonels and generals, to which Mendel has gotten me invited as "Press."

The spectators sit in a makeshift grandstand waiting for the tanks to be let out of their parking lot, where they are kept in orderly rows with mittens fitted over their cannons. When they start to move, the ground commences trembling. I count thirty tanks moving, then racing across the field, chewing up rock and sand in their treads, generating an angry noise. In the open turret of each of these things, exposed to the waist, stands the cadet commander of a five-man crew. One of these exposed figures, wearing steel vest, leather helmet, earphones, and goggles, is Mendel, but though he has told me the number of his tank, I can't find it. I can't even focus the binoculars on any single tank long enough to read its number, for they move in and out of patterns with unexpected speed, raising dust, turning, stopping dead, springing forward, like tawny-colored cats romping in a sandbox. Meanwhile the turrets swivel and the cannon move back and forth as if feeling about for something in the air. This goes on for a long time. I can't understand what is happening. When I am on the verge of asking the gentleman beside me whether this is an exercise in maneuvering for position, the shooting starts. For some reason, it takes me by surprise. A tank will suddenly dart out from the milling pack and the dust, and, still moving, fire a shell at the moving target—which is a big oil can rolling down an incline on the far side of the practice field, near the beach. The explosive CRACK! of the cannon as each tank takes its shot makes my ears ring, but that is nothing compared with the concussion of the occasional direct hit. This follows a sound that is at once a scream and a roar. When the smoke drifts (which seems to be immediately) what was a barrel before is now a ripped, twisted piece of scrap, a tangle of metal on fire.

Most of the shots are near-misses and ricochets. I don't know if the gray-haired officer who is sitting next to me grimaces at each shot because

he thinks the exercise is going badly. A burning stench reaches the grandstand. I leave early, before the show is quite over, hyped-up, impressed, nauseated.

* * *

TODAY Jarvis pleased me again. One of the pictures that has not been torn from the book, and which proves that the Major was not among those Englishmen who went native, shows him in the wilderness somewhere, wearing a coat, high collar, tie, and jodhpurs. A mustache points up from his lips and a long, straight pipe is clenched between his teeth. Jarvis is leaning on a shotgun. On either side of him Bedouin servants—trained beaters, I learn from the text of the chapter—display the quail that Jarvis killed that day.

Jarvis describes the habits of the animals that live in Sinai, this deceptively barren-looking place. He tells how your servants should prepare and cook the various types of game that abound at certain seasons. He recounts how he once spent several days stalking a beautiful specimen of the extremely rare ibex (a wild goat, I gather) among the crags in the vicinity of St. Katherine's only to have it escape when Jarvis, for a careless moment, let himself get between the wind and the animal's super-sensitive nose.

Jarvis the administrator, anthropologist, hunter, and naturalist gives way in successive chapters to Jarvis the historian and archaeologist, and Jarvis the agnostic, with his own small comment to make corroborating something in the Bible.

As the only land bridge between Asia and Africa, "it is not surprising," in the Major's opinion, that Sinai is the place where more armies have fought more battles than anywhere else, "not excluding Belgium." Some of the armies that have fought in it or passed through have been: Pharaonic, Hittite, Assyrian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Mohammedan, Crusader, Mameluke, French, Turk, and British. The civilizations in the way were often devastated, until today there is none. Artifacts of agriculture, religion, cosmology, and war are scattered around the sites of burial mounds and ruined, buried cities. Jarvis notes these things with restrained enthusiasm. He lets his readers in on some of his own modest but not uninteresting finds. The professional archaeologists have only scratched the surface, according to him. At least in this respect, the Peninsula is a precious treasure. As an example of the kind of work that should be done, Jarvis refers briefly to the excavations and surveys of Israelite fortifications carried out by young Lawrence just before the Great War. Another English team has discovered wall-inscriptions in a mine near the Red Sea, which are in a "Proto-Sinaitic" language, and are the oldest alphabetical (non-hieroglyphic) writing

known, dating to roughly the fifteenth century before Christ, or two hundred years before the Exodus from Egypt.

I detect a trace of pride when Jarvis finally comes to speak of the redeeming fact that the region he is governor of was the scene of important happenings in history other than military. For though he seems to have been an agnostic, he accepts the events of the Book of Exodus, including the Law-Giving, as being based on real occurrences, citing some of the English, and even German, scholarship that convinced him. What he can add from his own knowledge is mostly by way of explaining naturally some of the "miracles." For example, manna falling from heaven is satisfactorily explained by the fact that sometimes flights of Sinai quail flock so thick that birds drop out of the sky, like locusts. This doesn't occur often; yet Jarvis has observed it more than once, and tells where in the Peninsula he saw it—as it so happens, places that coincide with the best information and guesses concerning the route of the "Israelites."

This question of the route seems to have been a touchy one that experts and amateurs liked to dispute. According to Jarvis, the most creditable theory is the one that makes the route go through the middle portion of the Sinai. This is where he made his quail-manna sightings, and where there is enough water to provide for thousands of people, who it is believed did not constantly wander for forty years, or however long it was, but settled down when they had the chance and their leader let them. Archaeological remains reinforce the middle-route theory. Without bothering to hide his opinion that they aren't worth much, Jarvis also notes some rival theories. The "northern" theory, for example, has the Israelites traveling parallel to the Mediterranean coast, on the Via Maris that connected Alexandria with Phoenicia and the Levant, by way of the town that is now El Arish. Jarvis rejects this "northern" theory, among other reasons because the much-traveled highway would have made the Israelites vulnerable to armies, marauders, and camp-followers, who liked to travel on it, and anyway it would have offered too many distractions for a people that had serious spiritual and natural business to attend to.

A third theory is that the Israelites took the longest, most difficult route imaginable: they followed the tracks of dried-up riverbeds into the mountain ranges of the southern tip of Sinai. Jarvis has to dismiss this theory, but with some misgivings. It means denying special claims that have attached to St. Katherine's and to the mountain that the monastery stands at the foot of. The old Christian tradition, implying a "southern" route, puts St. Katherine's on the place where Moses heard God speaking out of the Burning Bush. The mountain adjacent, therefore, would be the actual Mount Sinai, since Moses had instructions to bring the

Israelites back to this holy ground to praise God and receive the Law.

The reason Jarvis slightly regrets having to dismiss this sentimental notion is that he wouldn't want to discourage his readers from visiting the monastery and its mountain. They "are well worth the rather arduous journey." In fact, I see from the table of contents, Jarvis thought St. Katherine's deserved to have a whole chapter devoted to it; in the copy of the book that I have, however, this chapter is missing. So too are most of the pages in the last chapter, "Practical Advice on Camping and Sightseeing."

When I come to the end of what there is of Jarvis's book, I am sad, and sorry that a vandal got his hands on this copy. Whoever it was spared a photograph, in the camping and sightseeing section, captioned "Author's Wife at Shore of Gulf of Suez (Red Sea)." The woman who Jarvis says cheered him up sits in the driver's seat of an open motor-car. She's a young European with bobbed hair. When did the Major retire, I wonder, when did he die in his English country house with its archaeological knick-knacks? Did his wife remarry? The photo of her is in black and white, of course, that time has made into not much more than a grayish image. It gives no idea of what the shore of the Gulf of Suez (Red Sea) really looks like.

* * *

The post doctor gives me a bottle of Kaopectate. He tells me that what I have is not uncommon among new arrivals. Predictably, it is called "Nasser's Revenge."

* * *

Mendel's leave has been indefinitely postponed. He recommends in the meantime that I visit St. Katherine's monastery.

* * *

August 10, 1968

OUTDOORS, under a planetarium sky, *Some Like It Hot* is about to be projected on a portable screen. Saturday night, and most of Abu Rodeis is here, sitting on chairs brought over from the mess-hall or sprawling on the sand in a funnel-shaped crowd that extends from the glowing screen out into the darkness. In the first row squat the Bedouin children and men, solemn and enthralled.

It is an old, flickering print that we view tonight. The sound track blasts fuzzily through a pair of loudspeakers, totally incomprehensible I'm sure to most of the Israelis, with their school-book English. A word, sometimes an entire sentence of the gabby, fast-talking script, escapes me, too, and I find myself squinting at the Hebrew subtitles. Whoever wrote them seems to have de-

cided, rather than make a hopeless effort at keeping up with the dialogue, to convey the main complications of the plot for sure, translating jokes and other business only when there was plenty of space and time. Thus a lot of the repartee goes unrendered, including some of the words that I miss in English. But in spite of the scratchy, booming sound, and the fact that I haven't heard much American for almost a year, I actually miss surprisingly little of this movie, which I've never seen before. My acquired, adopted language is the one that has made the deepest grooves on my brain.

Two unemployed musicians scrounge the streets, trying to figure a way of surviving the winter. Within the very first frames of the movie, I experience a sensation that must be homesickness. This is unexpected, and strange, because the scene of the action—gangster-ridden Chicago in the Depression—is unknown to me and the characters are burlesque inventions. Yet there it is, for a moment, that shock of familiarity and regret. The movie is excellent, well-made, and soon I am paying it close attention: my nostalgia passes, replaced by a certain pleasure that is not so complete as to prevent me from being aware of the response of the audience around me.

The Israelis are enthusiastic moviegoers. I think the statistics put them as high in the world standings for movie tickets purchased per capita as for highway accidents. Yet typically, once the house lights dim and the movie goes on, they are unruly and inattentive. A favorite activity, very ingratiating, is rolling empty Tempo bottles down the aisles. At the shows here in Abu Rodeis, however, the audience behaves itself.

What do the army boys and girls by the shores of the Red Sea make of the blowing, falling white stuff that causes Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon to shiver and turn their collars up? The soldiers may be mystified, but they keep quiet, watching the screen and reading the captions, and at moments becoming as entranced by the images as the Bedouin are continuously. Marilyn Monroe's parody of sex-appeal produces absolute silence. When the transvestism begins, the girl soldiers titter. The strictly visual comedy, such as the play on sleeping arrangements in the Pullman going south to Florida, draws big laughs and a lot of applause.

Intermission to change reels. The civilians who are sitting in a group near Mendel and me pass a flask around among themselves.

Now, as the plot of the movie thickens and the crisis arrives, the audience howls. It has followed the development faithfully and is rewarded by understanding the hilarious mechanics of mistaken identities, close shaves, etc. Yet its understanding is not equivalent to mine. Tony Curtis, a bush-league Jewish musician impersonating a WASP millionaire, entertains Marilyn Monroe on a yacht anchored off Palm Beach. Inspecting the salon of the boat, Marilyn, referring to a stuffed gamefish

over the mantle, asks in a baby voice, "What kind of fish is that?" Curtis, flustered, bethinks himself and comes up with the answer. "That fish? It's a herring." The line is correctly translated in the subtitle, but no one in the audience laughs, except me: no one "gets" it as I do.

They roll up the screen when the movie is finished. Some of the crowd disperses, the civilians leave. Mendel, helping to load chairs on a truck for return to the mess-hall, tells me to wait, he'll bring me something for tomorrow. It has been arranged that I will go up to St. Katherine's with the troops who are relieving the Israeli garrison there.

Some among the movie crowd who remain are dragging driftwood toward a smudge in the sand and starting a bonfire. A girl sprinkles gasoline on the flames which leap, shooting sparks into the air. The sky is immense, moonless, full of prehistoric stars burning cold and steady. A guitar materializes. Lying about on the sand, the Israelis sing and clap their hands. A boy blows into a harmonica. They form a ring, arm to shoulder, and start dancing barefoot around the fire, singing while they dance. Lights and shadows dart over their bodies. They prance, and dip, and change directions, breathing fast and laughing. They kick sand, and I grit my teeth against the tugging watery pressure in my gut.

Mendel, back again, gives me a package wrapped in newspaper. Now they are singing an old song, about the seasons, that I remember from my childhood in Palestine. Most of the other songs have been unfamiliar to me. I thank my cousin and say goodbye to him.

The package from Mendel contains: a blanket, a canteen, a pair of boots, one set of freshly-laundered fatigues, a pair of khaki shorts. I prepare this stuff and my Air France bag for my departure in the morning, and then switch off the light and switch on the radio, and lie down on the bunk.

At night, the Phillips pulls in the BBC from Cyprus. The News of the World program broadcasts excerpts of Nixon's speech in acceptance of the Republican nomination. On the borders of Czechoslovakia, the armies of the Warsaw Pact countries are holding maneuvers again. Dubcek and his colleagues say that they are not alarmed and that the integrity of Czechoslovakia is assured. In the darkness, the radio tubes glow.

This is the way I used to lie on my bed at night, with the lights out, listening to the Red Sox game on the radio, fantasizing that I was Ted Williams.

A taste of the joy of performing physically with grace and effectiveness is a heady thing. Seductive, too, for it may lead some to make an ideology of it. Isaac Babel, enamored of the Cossack horsemen, rode with them and used his gift to praise them, without excessive irony. Rapists in the service of the Revolution, grown men playing base-

ball for a living—to each misfit, his idols and his supplementary activity in which he can fleetingly believe himself the master rather than the slave of the body that through no fault of his own he has been sentenced to pass his life inside of.

Here are today's cricket scores.

* * *

TWELVE heading out to St. Katherine's in four open jeeps just after dawn—eleven Israeli soldiers, and myself. Two of the jeeps are Willys, made in the U.S., two, rather larger, are Russian, taken in the war. Each jeep carries three passengers. I half-sit, half-loll in the rear of one of the American vehicles, among the knapsacks, beside the strut of the mounted machinegun.

The little convoy speeds south along the sea in the direction of Sharm el Sheik for a few miles, then takes a sharp turn inland, off the highway and onto a dirt track that has been worked over by tanks but is still fairly hard and straight. Presently, after the last oil derrick has been left behind, this track peters out. The trail-blazing jeep (the one I am in) bumps along at a slower pace and lower gear until the driver reaches a wide expanse of parched soil and sand stretching away into the distance between ledges of granite. The jeeps begin traveling in a wadi—a dried-up riverbed. In the spring, according to Jarvis, when the snow melts in the mountains further inland, these gullies can be filled in a flash by a torrent of water. Now, in August, there is no sign whatsoever that I can see indicating that water has ever passed over this ground, let alone into it: everything, including the occasional tamarisk bush, is perfectly arid brown and yellow, between ledges and cliffs that grow steeper and higher as I travel deeper into the tip of Sinai, under a blue-white sky.

To drive along these wadis requires special skills. In some spots the surface is hard enough, but in others it is nothing but deep, soft sand. The object is to weave a path along the riverbed that will avoid the sandtraps. This is tricky, because the sandy sections are camouflaged by a crust that looks (to me) reliable enough, but which cracks immediately under the weight of a jeep, causing it to sink to the hubs, and sometimes bog down. Wadi-driving demands expertise and good eyesight. It also calls for quick decision-making, since it is crucial to maintain speed, no matter whether the surface is hard or soft. Sitting among the knapsacks, bracing myself against the machinegun, I figure out this driving technique for myself, understand the necessity and rationale of it.

Riding in a jeep that is being driven skillfully through the wilderness is not unlike being on board a small sailboat that is tacking in a strong breeze. The driver seldom steers straight ahead.

He is always swerving, experimenting, trying another course and another gear. When the jeep hits a sandy patch in spite of his best judgment, the tires spew sand behind like the foaming wake of a boat, and the jeep shudders, shimmies, and leans precariously, as if it were going to capsize. The first couple of times that the jeep is traveling this way I believe that in fact we are in danger of tipping over. The driver, seeming to have lost control, lets go of the wheel. But that is only the standard operating procedure; most of the time it succeeds, the jeep finding its own way out of the difficulty. At these times, holding on to the machinegun with diminished concern, I can hear the passengers in the other jeeps laughing through the revving of the motors and the grinding of gears. Do the drivers occasionally stray, just for fun?

I am inclined to doubt it, because if the jeep doesn't nose its own way out, it will get stuck, and in that case the convoy must make a halt in the heat while the jeep is extricated. This happens half a dozen times at least during the morning, and it can be a tough job getting the jeep out. If the group of men beside and behind it don't push at exactly the right moment, the wheels spin instead of catching, the jeep sinks deeper, and then it must be dug out with entrenching tools. "OK, boys—now push!" the driver shouts. With my hands against the hot metal of the fender, I push like the others, and grimace in the sun, and spit sand. When the jeep is unmired, you have to run after it and jump on any which way.

Toward midday the convoy arrives at an oasis. The jeeps are parked in the shade of the green and brown date palms, and the soldiers wash the grit from their faces and hands. Someone says not to drink the water—it's brackish. Instead they drink out of canteens, and eat sandwiches and fruit prepared back at the Abu Rodeis mess-hall. For a couple of hours I rest with them quietly in the shade, waiting for the heat to subside. There are flies here, but they are not numerous, nor are they very active.

I DON'T know any of the men around me. They may have been posted at the Canal before, and spent the night at Abu Rodeis on the way to St. Katherine's. Their anonymity is protected by the handkerchiefs and goggles that everyone wears against the sand while traveling—I wear the lightweight plastic goggles also, they are shaped to accommodate eyeglasses. I can't tell the soldiers apart by rank, either, because their chevrons are covered with dust, and no one seems to be giving orders.

On what appears to be a common impulse, they get up and get ready to go when the sun begins throwing somewhat longer shadows. The oasis is left behind, the skidding, bumpy ride across the sand is resumed.

"How long before we hit the Playboy Club?" I

hear the soldier who is in the "shot-gun" seat ask the driver, after an hour or so.

"We'll be there soon."

The jeeps hum along, now over a harder surface, with the cliffs towering above them, lurid-colored and rose like the terrain of the Dakota badlands in old Technicolor adventures.

The horn of one of the jeeps begins sounding insistently. The convoy stops and a soldier walks over to the leading jeep.

"Say, shouldn't we have passed the Playboy Club by now?" he asks the driver.

"It's around the bend, another fifteen minutes," is the answer. "We overstayed at the oasis, that's all."

"You sure you know where you're going?"

"Sure I'm sure. Just don't worry your head, OK? Let's go."

The jeeps get under way again, and about fifteen minutes later the driver stops of his own accord and turns off the motor. The other men dismount, pull their handkerchiefs down around their throats, crowd around the lead jeep.

"I think we took a turn up the wrong wadi, after the oasis," the driver says matter-of-factly.

"We didn't take the wrong turn."

"OK, let's not fight. He made a mistake, but we're all going to pay for it."

"Are we lost? We are, aren't we?"

"Quiet."

A map in a plastic slipcover is taken from the glove compartment, unfolded, and spread out on the hood of the jeep, with a compass. Several of the men put their heads together over it. All four motors have been turned off, and the silence is palpable, making the arguing voices seem small, especially at a certain distance. I walk a hundred yards or so toward the nearest granite wall, that rises almost sheer and perpendicular from the hard sand. Utter silence. No oil rigs clanking, or Red Sea surf breaking softly, or any animal life except a sunbathing lizard that catches my eye and vanishes in the same instant as I begin taking a leak. The urine is absorbed in the ground as into a sponge.

"There's no way we can make it by sundown," the lead driver is saying as I return. He is having trouble refolding the map.

"Don't you think I know that? Let's just make time, OK?"

The motors screech and roar to life, the convoy turns around, and begins speeding back over the tire tracks that it laid down. My jeep is number two in line now, consequently the dust is heavier. The speedometer needle touches fifty, I think—I'm being bounced vigorously, and what with the dust on the instrument panel, it's hard to be sure. But the speed is definitely faster than before. The convoy is racing, and at the same time the sun is slanting, and the shadows move quickly, claiming more and more of the area of the wadi-bed. The high surrounding rocks begin

to turn purple, flashing with mineral veins. Soon the sun falls behind the top of the ridge; and the entire wadi-bed is in shade, while the sky remains bright blue. The air is noticeably cooler.

At this point a horn begins sounding again. "Now what?" the driver says. Behind us, a large Russian jeep has stopped. It is almost completely obscured in a cloud of what I realize is steam. By the time the other jeeps have halted, one of the passengers in the stricken car has succeeded in getting its hood up. He is being careful to stay away from the boiling geyser that is spewing from the radiator.

Another crowd scene as the men plod over to take a look and consider what to do.

"Yofee," someone says. "Marvelous."

"It's one of those no-good pieces of junk."

A smell of scorched rubber.

"No, they're good machines. The only trouble is, you see, the thermostats are set for Siberia."

Water from a jerry-can is sprinkled over the radiator. The steam spreads, then blows away. On the inside of the raised hood, a plate with serial numbers and the words in Cyrillic script, GORKI WORKS USSR.

"What's the story?"

"This radiator pipe is about to blow, friends," says the voice of a soldier who has crawled under the front end of the jeep.

"Ya, chabibi."

The sky is dark blue now, it is actually getting cold.

"What are we going to do?"

"We'll just have to spend the night, let it cool down completely. If that pipe goes, we're in a nice situation."

"What, right here?"

"This is as good a place as any."

"Shouldn't we at least try to reach the oasis?"

"I wouldn't chance it. Besides, in the dark we could get good and lost."

"You may be right."

"OK, boys, we're bivouacking."

The other jeeps are backed up and then parked in such a way as to form a large square.

"Some of you guys go gather tamarisk, before it gets too dark."

The dry, sun-bleached tamarisk branches snap off easily in my dirty hands. I carry a load of this wood in my arms and dump it on the ground inside the enclosure made by the jeeps. The stars are beginning to come out. I wash my face and hands in canteen-water, and rinse my mouth, gritty with sand. A soldier has dug a hole and heaped up the tamarisk. Now he puts a cigarette lighter to it, and the flames shoot up, explode almost, as if the wood had been drenched in gasoline. Within the squared circle of the jeeps, it is bright—the men's faces weirdly lit. Beyond, the darkness. Someone starts making coffee, and

someone else gives me a mess kit and a K-ration. They lie around the fire, eating.

"We'd better post guards tonight."

"What for? There's nothing out here except Bedouin."

"Just the same, let's do it. Rafi, you take the first two hours with Mordechai. I'll take the second watch with Roberto. Any volunteers for the third?"

"Yeah, OK."

"I'll keep you company."

They spoke before I could.

"Let's bed down, folks. I want to get an early start tomorrow."

They unroll their blankets and sleeping bags in the lee of the jeeps, near the fire. The ground is hard.

"Ain't this swell?"

"Man, I should've stayed at the Canal."

"Stop kvetching. How about those stars, huh?"

"Any Sputniks up there?"

"The Star Room at the Sinai Hilton."

"Here, let me give you a hint." He shows him how to scoop the sand so that hips and shoulders can lie more naturally. I follow this example and get quite comfortable, rolled up in my blanket, using the Air France bag for a pillow.

Some of them are playing cards. The sentries stand at the edge of the illuminated area, holding their "Uzzi" submachine guns. The fire crackles vivaciously. Tamarisk bushes, I remember Jarvis noting before I fall into a deep sleep, sometimes ignite by spontaneous combustion in the summer sun. Jarvis has seen lone bushes burning in the wilderness. This would not explain, however, the bush that Moses saw, that burned without being consumed.

In the morning, where the fire was is a pile of ashes. I get up refreshed. After only twenty-four hours, the stubble is prickly on my neck, chin, and cheeks.

The convoy resumes following its own tracks. Presently yesterday's oasis comes into sight, and we bear right and, this time, take the correct wadi, which soon is so firm beneath the tires—rock-like, really—that there is no need for goggles and masks. The jeeps begin climbing a long, gentle grade. Around mid-day, we arrive at a large tent beside an oasis that is smaller, but greener, than the first one. On the walls of the tent these words have been carefully inscribed, in white-wash: "Cafe Pleyboy." A Bedouin with a dagger in his belt is coming forward to greet us, preceded by children in rags.

"There's Abdul."

We have lunch here. Sitting under a tent-flap, we are served flat bread, an oily paste, salad, dates, and coffee by women of whom nothing is visible except hands and eyes. Abdul ceremoniously directs the introduction and removal of the dishes, while the boy and girl children cluster around us, squealing and staring. They look as

if they have never been washed. A kid in rags and sneakers, smiling through his widely-spaced buck teeth, totes a rifle that is almost as big as he is.

"Look at that old Mauser," one of the soldiers says. "My dad has one like that at home."

A child just out of infancy watches in silence, actively sucking its thumb. It looks like a girl-child, and is almost naked. At puberty, the females metamorphose into walking tents, with eye-slits provided.

The dates are sticky-sweet, the coffee strong and bitter. I lick the residue of the dates off my fingers and dip them in the water of the oasis. A flock of goats in the vicinity, one ship of the desert. Abdul, resolutely refusing at first, throwing his hands up in a gesture of refusal, is prevailed upon to accept payment, and so we take our leave, the ragged filthy children running after us for the longest time.

Now, all afternoon, the jeeps climb, climb perpetually, and the landscape changes again. Where before it was a badlands that reminded me of cowboy movies, it is now a scene of some intensely ancient geologic cataclysm. The granite boulders, cliffs, and escarpments are as if frozen in the midst of liquefying earthquakes, lava and cinders streaming motionless and silent between the cracks and in the open spaces. There was a convulsion here once, and the evidence of it is awesome even to the young, brash soldiers, even to me. We drive up, always up (my ears are popping),

without saying anything. The jeeps, in low gear, climb along the edge of deep pits and canyons, working, their tires hugging the rocky incline. The air takes on a chill well before twilight. I put on a sweater, my muscles aching pleasantly. In the failing light we crawl along a narrow track that is little more than a crevice between huge masses of granite. The headlights are turned on, throwing yellow cones of light into the desolation, picking out sudden turnings, and then spotlighting a Bedouin, standing full in the middle of the trail as on a stage, hands on hips, dressed in a shining white robe. We stop and there is palaver in Arabic, then this romantic figure waves us forward in the semi-darkness, which for me is almost full darkness. The stars are coming out again. We pass some vague forms of tents, a row of cypresses, a garden with vines, the inky trunks of palm trees, and then abruptly the track ends. We are facing a perpendicular wall of stone, at the top of which I can see, by squinting, the regular geometric pattern of medieval battlements, as on top of the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem. The driver of the first jeep leans long and hard on his horn. "Hey, Moysheh, open up!" someone yells. Presently a square of yellow light appears, as of a window opening, high up in the ramparts, the shape of a human head and shoulders is framed in that light, then disappears, and a moment later the great portals of the monastery swing open with creaking to let us drive inside.

The Revolt of the Masses

Jeane Kirkpatrick

LAST year's Presidential election differed from elections of the recent past not so much because of how people voted as *why*. For millions of Americans cultural values displaced pocketbooks as the chief determinant of Presidential voting. Because McGovern was widely perceived as standard-bearer of the New Politics, his nomination catapulted into the political arena some basic questions of identity and purpose which Americans have rarely tried to resolve by political means. The final voting patterns in the election—especially the widespread, selective ticket-splitting—confirmed what the polls and observation had already revealed: that the Presidential election of 1972 had become a cultural class struggle with Richard Nixon cast as leader of the masses and George McGovern as the spokesman of an embattled revolutionary elite. This, to say the least, was a strange situation for an electorate in which Democrats outnumber Republicans by a large margin, and it led, for the first time in American history, to a landslide defeat for the majority party.

The theory and practice of American politics left many well-informed observers unprepared for the large-scale, grass-roots revolt of Democrats that occurred on November 7. Though they warned that McGovern would have problems with traditional Democrats, neither Muskie nor Humphrey foresaw the massive popular rejection of the party's nominee. Most of the national Democratic leadership apparently believed the McGovern line—so popular among columnists and media pundits—that alienated Middle Americans would embrace George McGovern as their natural spokesman once Governor Wallace was out of the race. The theories of voting behavior offered by academic political scientists supported the expectation that

when the chips were down, party loyalty would prove compelling and would pull back into the Democratic ranks those who had preferred another nominee or who had misgivings about McGovern or his positions. Theory and practice alike supported an expectation that bread-and-butter issues would prove more “basic” than “superficial” disagreements and that in times of continuing inflation and unemployment regular Democrats would finally vote their pocketbooks as they had done so frequently in the past. In short, economic issues, party identification, and McGovern's special appeal to the alienated would assure his ultimate acceptance by traditional Democrats.

The fact that McGovern did not receive an expected increase of support immediately after his nomination offered a jolt to this view of matters, but was quickly and widely attributed to the Eagleton affair. Yet, although the dumping of this attractive young Senator, and the vacillation associated with the decision to dump him, certainly did not help Senator McGovern's prospects, it seems clear that the second “McGovern phenomenon,” his decisive election defeat, cannot be explained either by the events surrounding the Vice-Presidential nomination or by the very real weaknesses in organizational and leadership skills shown by Senator McGovern during the campaign. To understand the defeat of the Democratic nominee it is necessary to go back to the first “McGovern phenomenon” and place it in its appropriate cultural context. Only then will it become clear why and how Senator McGovern was so overwhelmingly defeated by a moderately popular Republican incumbent—at a time when economic problems were real and widespread, when the Vietnam war had not come to a halt, when violent crimes were still on the rise, when the incumbent was beset by a series of messy scandals.

THE old Roosevelt coalition of the Democratic party, whose disintegration laid the foundation for the second “McGovern phenomenon,” was a loose amalgam of the economically less advantaged against the economically more advantaged. The depressed and traditionally Democratic South provided the base, to which was added the industrial working classes of the urban North and West. The ethnics, like

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the Northern blacks, were integrated into the coalition by virtue of their socioeconomic status. The Roosevelt coalition was cemented by the common interests of millions of Americans of relatively low education, relatively low social status, and relatively low income, who suffered a relatively high incidence of unemployment and who shared an aspiration for a larger voice in the government and a larger slice of the socioeconomic pie. Studies in voting behavior only served to confirm what Democratic politicians, in putting together the coalition, had already understood: that the principal political cleavages in the United States reflected differences in socioeconomic status.

This is not to say that the nation was rent by economic class war, or that either party was economically homogeneous. There were working-class Italians, small-town Yankees, and Midwestern farmers who voted Republican; there were upper-income Southerners, patrician Yankees and New Yorkers, and some "progressive" professionals who voted Democratic. But despite some overlapping characteristics, the two parties had distinctive socioeconomic bases, and of the two, the Democrats, at least since Roosevelt, concerned themselves above all with issues of economic status, security, and opportunity. This preoccupation was the distinguishing characteristic of the New Deal, Fair Deal, and the Great Society, and of the volumes of Democratic social and economic legislation put on the books during the last three-and-a-half decades.

Yet socioeconomic class was not the only basis of group identification in America during these years—religious, ethnic, regional, and national identifications were also widely in evidence—and economic and welfare issues were by no means the only problems facing Americans in the 40's and 50's—the Second World War, the spread of Communism, and the growing involvement of America in international affairs were events of indisputable importance and had a great impact on the American consciousness. It is true that when it came to actual voting in elections, these issues were less decisive than economic and welfare issues, but it is a mistake to conclude from this fact that political party competition is always and necessarily a "tame" version of the economic class struggle. As only a little reflection serves to remind us, the most important issues are not always economic issues. In our history, the American Civil War, the excited struggle to secure a sober America through the Eighteenth Amendment, the bitter debate over the League of Nations, the intensity of the fight for women's suffrage, are only a few examples of issues and events which polarized the nation on the basis of non-economic identifications. As Harold Laswell, an especially astute commentator on values and social process, has pointed out, time and again throughout history such factors as religion, race, language, caste, or attitudes on moral issues have served as the basis

of common political action; they have aroused passions of great intensity and precipitated struggles of long duration.

THESE issues, and the values peculiar to them, may be called broadly "cultural," to differentiate them from the "welfare" values and issues that are of basically socioeconomic significance. In the United States in the past decade we have seen the rise of such cultural issues to political salience. That we are living in a period of cultural revolution has been widely remarked. Indeed, the issues associated with cultural revolution have been central to American politics at least since the occupants of Grant Park—described according to one's perspective as "our children" or "those bums"—diverted (with a large assist from the electronic media) attention from the proceedings in the 1968 Democratic convention to the violence in the streets. The impact of cultural conflict on the 1968 Presidential campaign was minimized in part because both Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon embodied traditional American culture, in part because Humphrey understood early in the campaign that his only chance lay in focusing the campaign on the economic issues which still cemented together the diverse groups of the old Roosevelt coalition. Urban riots, crime, campus violence, Vietnam—the cultural issues—were Nixon's issues. Humphrey knew that his hope lay in the bread-and-butter issues and the pull of party identification. By playing both to the hilt he nearly succeeded in splitting the electorate on the basis of the old economic cleavages, and he almost won the election.

In 1969, however, when George McGovern made the decision to run for President, he knew that his hope lay elsewhere.

"I've made up my mind [he told Tom Wicker of the *Times*], I'm going all the way. I'm going to run for President and the coalition I'm going to put together is going to be built around the poor and the minorities and the young people and the anti-war movement."

McGovern's "strange new coalition of the discontented and the disadvantaged and the alienated," as Wicker called it, shared an outsider's perspective on the traditional political culture. McGovern's "crucial insight" was to see the political potential of these outsiders. And when he captured the Democratic nomination with his coalition "built around the poor and the minorities and the young people and the anti-war movement" the die was cast, the nature of the 1972 Presidential contest was decided. In the long campaign through the primaries McGovern had presented himself as the veritable embodiment of the New Politics. By the time of the convention he became just that. Yet as the candidate of one cultural class, he became the opponent of another. McGovern came

to be perceived by millions of Americans as a man who had gone over to the enemy.

Who is this enemy? What are the values that separate the New from the Old Politics? It is probably nearly impossible to state these in a way that would be acceptable to both parties. As is the case with many cultural issues they can perhaps be best communicated via the symbols, or code words, of conflict: "the streets of Chicago," Mayor Daley, hard-hats, hippies, Hubert Humphrey, quotas, pot, draft resisters, university disorders, the Vietnam spring, Forest Hills, community control, Richard Nixon, the flag, Archie Bunker, the American Dream. Everyone knows these code words: they define the sides and the stakes in a struggle over individual morality and national purpose. They cohere because the attitudes associated with each culture, the "old" and the "new," support a total vision of society, culture, and personality.

Because they cohere, each of these symbols suggests an entire syndrome. On the floor of the Democratic convention in Miami Jerry Rubin commented jubilantly that while he had three sets of floor credentials, Mayor Daley could not get into the hall. To one side in the cultural conflict this comment suggested an open convention, kids working inside the system, a new style of life come to power, political reform, the representation of Chicanos, women, blacks, an end to the immoral war in Vietnam. But to the other side, watching the Miami convention on television and noting the fact, as newsmen never tired of pointing out, that the people who had been in the streets in Chicago were now inside Convention Hall, Rubin's comment undoubtedly conjured images of drugs and disorder, of an irrational politics smacking of fascism, of anti-Americanism, of disregard for loyal service to the party, of mistreatment of labor representatives and white ethnic groups. Class war echoed in the charges of "elitism" and "anti-labor snobs," being hurled back and forth at Miami. The rejection of a proposed preamble to the Democratic platform confirmed that there would be no nod in the direction of the Old Politics. McGovern's careful avoidance of the name of Lyndon Johnson emphasized the rejection of the bad old past. The presence of Gay Lib and advocates for legalization of abortion underlined cultural cleavages.

No movement that comprises such diverse groups as lower-class blacks and upper-class white college students is culturally monolithic, but the New Politics, like the Old, has dominant themes and a dominant mood. The New Politics is the expression of the political counter-culture; it is united by its opposition to the traditional political culture, and it challenges that culture's central beliefs: the belief that politics is based on self-interest; that conflict is a permanent feature of politics; that the pursuit of individual purpose is

socially beneficial; that freedom is rooted in law; that equality of opportunity and individual achievement constitute a just basis of reward; that power is an instrument necessary to social and international peace; that deprivation is an appropriate social incentive; that those who cannot work should be supported by public funds and those who will not should be treated less generously; that authority rests on force as well as consent; that authority must be protected and preserved; that work (read discipline) has intrinsic value for persons and societies; that citizenship requires obedience to laws with which one disagrees; that violation of the law should be punished; that order is a prerequisite to both liberty and justice; that patriotism is a social virtue; that the U.S. is a basically decent and successful—though imperfect—society. The political counter-culture notes the self-interest of the old political classes and charges corruption. To the self-interest and materialism of the Old Politics it opposes the morality of the outcast and the innocent (read young); to the ethic of discipline it opposes the belief that frustration and deprivation are the sources of aggression, violence, and crime. To the venality of the Old Politics it opposes a new idealism. Against the injustice and oppression tolerated by traditional politics it offers hopes and demands: for a society that will be more just, more humane, more fun.

The Old Politics *assumes* that it is the function of government to protect and preserve domestic tranquility, to foster respect for the law of the land, to reward individual achievement and initiative, to conduct politics with moderation, to compromise. Though practice has not always reflected these values, their relevance and moral status has never been doubted. The New Politics has roots in the tradition of civil disobedience. Its dominant style is moral outrage, tinged with violence. Tolerance is less highly regarded than rectitude; compromise is less important than moral consistency. The good guy of the old political culture is the law-abiding, hard-working tax-paying provider. The good guy of the new political culture is the outcast (together with his champion). The characteristic vice of the Old Politics is corruption; of the New, fanaticism. At its worst, the rhetoric of the Old Politics is sentimental and chauvinistic. At its worst, the rhetoric of the New is apocalyptic and snobbish, filled with the contempt of one cultural class for another.

The Old Politics, like the New, has a characteristic style: a tendency to trust authority, to value tradition, to avoid conflict, and to seek consensus. The style of the New Politics is roughly the opposite; it is characterized by a tendency to distrust authority, to prefer the new, to seek conflict in the form of "confrontation." Lyndon Johnson, with the deference he showed Speaker Sam Rayburn, his cooperation with Republican President Eisenhower, his indefatigable search for

consensus in the Senate, offers a good example of the style of the former; Bella Abzug, with her noisy distrust of leadership, her energetic confrontations, and her adversary demeanor, is almost a caricature of the style of the latter.

IN RETROSPECT it is not difficult to trace the rise of the political counter-culture to prominence. The political counter-culture grew dialectically out of the values of the dominant political culture, out of the humanitarianism and liberalism associated with the New Deal, out of the idealist's disdain for bourgeois society. It grew too out of the perceived imperfections of social reality and the impatience and offended sensibilities of intellectuals. Among some liberals and Democrats, sympathy for the outcast, defense of minorities, rejection of materialism, regard for the accused, concern for the poor and the weak, dislike of nationalism and war grew and changed almost imperceptibly into a new political ethic that disdained the Old Politics and old politicians, preferred the nation's enemy, apologized for rioters, shielded black extremists, "understood" young revolutionaries. For many liberals an unfortunate side effect of the concern for securing justice for black Americans was a tendency to regard the whole white South as morally untouchable. The distance between the white South and the national Democratic party grew: the Presidency of the Southerner Lyndon Johnson actually did more to accelerate than to moderate tensions. The estrangement between labor and the new cultural class has its roots in the social conservatism of the working classes, in the contempt of some liberals for the grubby trade-union mentality noted so long ago by Lenin. It grew rapidly with the attacks of the counter-culture on middle-class life and middle-class values.

The values of the New Class spread among the idealists of society: intellectuals enamored with righteousness and possibility; college students, for whom perfectionism is an occupational hazard; portions of the upper classes freed from concern with economic self-interest; clergymen contemptuous of materialism; bureaucrats with expanding plans to eliminate evil; romantics derisive of Babbitt and Main Street. The values of the counter-culture, spread throughout the population by expanding college enrollments, were purveyed to the public at large by magazines oriented to intellectual fashion and by the mass media, with their elevation of the cultural category of style to paramount symbolic status. The Vietnam war exacerbated conflict between the traditional culture and the counter-culture because it raised questions of morality and political obligation and because the well-publicized mass demonstrations, without exception, served to celebrate the counter-culture as much as to register disapproval of the war in Southeast Asia. (It is this association of the anti-war movement with the counter-culture that rendered the

war of so little use as an issue to George McGovern. Another candidate, culturally less defined, might have been better able to turn popular discontent over the war to electoral advantage.)

But if it is not difficult in retrospect to trace the rise of the political counter-culture, it is not difficult either to understand why the dominant culture should seek to protect its vested interest in traditional values. One is, after all, one's culture, and cultural revolution is the most painful kind of social change, causing as it does a loss of confidence in one's basic relation to society. Rapid cultural change corrodes the sense of self, casting doubt not merely on values but on standards of value, not only on the answers one gives but on the questions one asks. Cultural revolution threatens to declare millions of Americans living relics, superannuated, irrelevant, superfluous.

Cultural-class differences cut across socioeconomic lines to unite portions of various social and economic categories: portions of the middle and working classes, portions of the Protestant and Catholic and Jewish populations, portions of the black bourgeoisie, portions of the executive and professional classes—most of those who belong to each of these categories are members of the traditional cultural class. Education has a bearing on cultural class differences, but the cultural classes do not divide simply on the basis of amount of education. There are intellectuals, college professors, and professionals on both sides of the cultural-class struggle. Cultural-class differences rest on a view of the world rather than on any specific body of information or set of skills. Neither income, education, nor occupation coincides precisely with cultural divisions.

Working-class Americans, middle-class Americans, upper-class Americans—significant numbers of each share traditional cultural-class values. Cultural revolution endangers both the discipline and the rewards of traditional culture; only the completely dispirited would fail to defend their way of life against an enemy. That most Americans perceive the counter-culture as an enemy has been reflected in public-opinion polls for at least half a decade. Most Americans did not see Chicago as a "police riot." They did not view university disorders as understandable—if misguided—expressions of the idealistic young. They do not view America as a sick or a repressive society, or crime as a quasi-legitimate form of political protest. They do not even regard the Vietnam war as a moral crime. Neither do they view the achievement ethic as the cultural artifact of a bygone era. Most Americans—the ethnics, the Catholics, the blue-collar workers, the union members, the Jewish small businessmen, the Southern whites, the Northern, Eastern, Western, Middle-western middle classes, the fundamentalists, the middle-class blacks, the Knights of Columbus, the Elks, the Moose—have a vested interest in the cul-

ture as well as in the economy; in the 1972 election, their interest in the culture was decisive.

ONE of the most fascinating questions about this election is why so many people should have failed to anticipate the outcome of a struggle in which counter-culture was pitted against traditional culture, with the issue to be settled by majority vote of the whole adult population. The explanation lies first, as I have noted, in the widespread conviction that economic values would be perceived by most people as more important than cultural values. It seems to have been assumed that the "common man" would ultimately vote for the party traditionally associated with full pocketbooks, even though it has been clear for some time that the new cultural class divisions did not coincide with economic categories. The special appeal of Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern to the upper-income white suburbs and white youth in elite educational institutions should have been adequate notice that something new and probably incompatible was being added to the old interest-based Roosevelt coalition.

Second, although the antipathy of the New Politics for the Old was widely commented upon, the fact that the disdain and disapproval were mutual was generally ignored in the weeks just prior to and after the Democratic convention in July. That McGovern supporters would leave the party if a representative of the Old Politics (such as Hubert Humphrey) were nominated was widely anticipated, but that hundreds of thousands of regulars would behave similarly if McGovern were nominated was not really a subject of concern. In short, that the distance between Humphrey or Jackson or Wallace or some Muskie supporters and McGovern was as great as that between McGovern supporters and the Old-Politics candidates was either not noted or not commented upon. A corollary error lay in the assumption that it would prove possible to weld the "alienated" supporters of George Wallace and the "alienated" supporters of George McGovern into a single bloc—another example of the failure to take culture seriously. The insistent expectations of McGovern supporters that the super-traditionalist Wallace supporters would rally 'round the New Politics rested either on the belief that Wallace voters would subordinate social and cultural values to economic values, or that they would not notice the difference between McGovern's and Wallace's "populism," or both. This belief was absurdly mistaken.

Third, a factor of crucial importance that almost completely escaped notice was the position

of Richard Nixon in the cultural-class struggle. The Republican convention was a carefully orchestrated symphony of the themes and rhythms of traditional culture. As conductor, President Nixon played cultural politics with consummate skill: flags, girls, speeches that honored work, respect even for Democrats, "True Grit," tolerance, moderation, patriotism. It should have been clear that in a contest between the New and the Old Politics Richard Nixon could be expected to attract vast numbers of Old-Politics votes cast on the basis of cultural rather than welfare values. And it should have been clear that a race between Nixon and McGovern would become a battle over which side would control the definition of cultural morality in the decade to come.

SENATOR MCGOVERN's basic problem in the Presidential campaign was an inability to establish identification with traditional American cultural values. Perhaps nothing expressed this more forcefully than McGovern's failure—no matter how hard he tried—to shake off his association with the carriers and symbols of one side of the struggle over values in contemporary society. At every campaign stop he was hounded by questions about the "three A's": amnesty, acid, and abortion, words that symbolized for many Americans the attack of the counter-culture on patriotism, the achievement ethic, and traditional religious morality respectively. There is a double irony here, for all his life this minister's son must have seen himself as a spokesman for highmindedness. It is of enormous significance that in his fervent efforts to communicate his moral acceptability to the electorate he fell back with greater and greater frequency on the Scriptures and on the language of his Methodist past.

Style, as Freud remarked, is the history of the man. In an effort to establish himself within the traditional culture McGovern returned instead to Social-Gospel Protestantism, a minority creed which shares with the counter-culture a devotion to purity of motive and an inflexible idealism, as well as a rejection of self-interest, materialism, and power. The Senator's message became the message of the missionary and the evangelist: repent your sins, turn away from Mammon, walk in the paths of righteousness, do not store up goods or power against tomorrow, remember the lilies of the field, have faith. The return to the minister's role could not move McGovern onto the majority side of the great cultural divide, and it could not save his party from the inevitable consequences of having forgotten—in its idealism—that even the masses do not live by bread alone.

Poetry and Public Experience

Stephen Donadio

IN AN age defined most vividly by the appearance of schematized conflict on all fronts, one of the most persistent difficulties encountered by the poet is the threat to his belief in the logic of his own experience. When the perception of our common experience is generalized and flattened, reduced by the effects of apocalyptic sloganeering (carried on in both the high and the plain style) to a numbing comic strip in which each new episode ultimately reveals the old anticipated pattern and nothing more, what basis does the poet have for affirming the intractable complexity of his own inner life? How can he justify his vital sense of the protean nature of his experience as an artist—the experience of ceaseless metamorphosis, in which the grimmest extremity of pain and confusion may yield the most radiant understanding, while the loveliest moral idea may be found to harbor a snake in its heart—when almost to a man acknowledged cultural authorities insist that there is only one experience, or a series of parallel experiences which fall into line like corollaries of a single law, to be had in America at the present time?

In the case of weaker sensibilities, the self-doubt prompted by such widespread assumptions may result in an almost total surrender of individual consciousness: in such cases, the conscious effort to trace the crosscurrents of one's particular experience is overwhelmed by an eagerness to please, and the poetic statements generated in consequence become more or less indistinguishable from the forms of self-congratulation current in more mundane varieties of sales promotion. At the opposite pole, hardier poetic natures may find themselves increasingly isolated, their works regarded as mere curiosities, highly individual but out of phase with the moment; fixed in attitudes of withdrawal or defiance, such poets often despair of finding a language with enough inner coherence to withstand the onslaught of ephemeral contemporary styles but still fluid enough to maintain an uneasy commerce with those styles, a language capable of

development and a kind of ironic bargaining with the times and not simply the invariable expression of a narrowing set of possibilities.

But in certain rare cases the perception of discrepancies between the actual texture of experience and the categories available for understanding it at any given time, between the range of approved models of feeling and the nameless but insistent feelings which reveal themselves precisely by eluding that net—such a perception may actually strengthen the imaginative effort by forcing it to become inclusive: provided that the claims of both ways of experiencing the present are recognized and taken seriously, the poetry may serve as a means of bringing individual and historical consciousness into a dialectical relationship which endows individual experience with the weight of history and historical perspective with the immediacy of individual experience. Success of this kind is achieved completely only in the greatest poems, of course, those works in which the poet, by locating his own experience in the larger scheme of time, has managed to keep both the subjective experience and the historical moment alive and accessible in an unprogressing present tense.

WITH the exception of John Ashbery's *Three Poems*—and the significance of that exception will become clear presently—the books discussed below have been selected more or less at random: they do not represent a comprehensive survey of the most distinguished poetry published in this country within the past few years. Such a survey, which would involve consideration of the work of Robert Lowell and the late John Berryman, for instance, as well as that of A. R. Ammons, Ashbery, James Merrill, and James Wright, might not serve to define the impulses at work in the current situation as clearly as some of the recent efforts of lesser contemporaries. Indeed, the characteristically high level of achievement of the poets mentioned (from a technical viewpoint, at least, they seem entirely capable of realizing any intention they choose) has the effect of making their limitations seem essentially idiosyncratic, a matter of temperament and vision rather than a reflection of larger forces abroad in the land. But

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the operation of such forces is revealed with an uncommon vividness in some of the works considered here, for more often than not the defects apparent in those works are related to the meagerness of the range of alternatives (of subject, tone, technique, and form) regarded by the poet as legitimate and viable under present circumstances. Thus, although the work of one or two of the poets discussed here is hardly known at all outside an extremely restricted circle, taken together their recent poems all imply the same claustrophobic situation to which John Ashbery addresses himself explicitly and which, as will be seen, he is able to transcend definitively simply by standing his ground as an artist.

In one way or another, and with varying degrees of success, each of the books considered below engages a fundamental doubt not only about the validity of personal experience, but about the possibility of the poetic enterprise itself as a means of ordering that experience without distorting it, a way of arranging one's impressions without twisting them into fantastic shapes by removing them from the recognizable context of one's life as it is actually lived from hour to hour, day to day.

DOUTBS of this kind take their greatest toll in the recent poems published by James Scully in *Avenue of the Americas*,* a book more sumptuously produced but considerably less distinguished than its predecessor (*The Marches*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967). Not that the first collection was especially satisfying, but it was unquestionably accomplished in just the way that its winning the Lamont Poetry Prize would indicate. Accompanied by an unfortunate humorless appendix of "Notes and Explanations" (which has its counterpart in the ponderous pages of epigraphs used to set off the sections of the new collection), these earlier poems exhibited an emotional orderliness and technical facility which made them appear admirable without being very interesting. Indeed, their very brittleness seemed a function of their success as exercises. Now what the new poems in *Avenue of the Americas* indicate is that under the pressure of time and painful experience the brittle shell of form has cracked; the good posture on the page has been replaced by a tendency to stoop and slouch, and the well-behaved language has begun acting up.

So far as the range of the poetry is concerned, all of this will probably work to the good in the long run; Mr. Scully is undeniably talented and dedicated to his craft, and he is not likely to let his changed intentions outstrip his technical abilities for very long. But in this new collection the effects of the loosening up are far from happy; all too often the result is shapelessness, a softening of structure and an unfocused quality in the

language. And that language can become downright embarrassing when, in a stiff academic way, it takes to swearing to its own casualness, as in such lines as these referring to Hart Crane: "Shit, I admit it/ I dig cats like that/ the way hustler Odysseus/ dug Philoctetes," or these about Marc Antony: "Having grooved like you/ throbbing still to the spade queen/ black witch Cleopatra/ Antony/ goes to the open window, and listens."

Many of the new poems are clearly autobiographical in content, but the emotions which they seek to explore are not always justified artistically. Released from the tight formal limitations which kept them in order (if often slightly reduced and oversimplified) in the early poems, here the emerging feelings have a tendency to lose their precise definition and collapse into that melancholy vagueness which is usually associated with sentimentality:

*Did we start out this way? No
but hope and dream, openhearted bull session
beer and cheap wine.
The whole crowd there.
Cigarette butts heaped in ashtrays
like broken crutches at Lourdes
smouldering under their own ruin.
Remember?
Neil talked of suckling pig
spitted and stuffed
an apple charming the mouth,
dreaming of pig feast.
Bach going on
all night on the phonograph
in the genius of first childhood.*

The indefiniteness of intention which is the undoing of this passage (a fairly representative one) extends to the syntax of the sentence beginning "No/ but beer and cheap wine" and the logic of the "broken crutches at Lourdes" simile, which remains entirely obscure. (The crutches at Lourdes have presumably been abandoned there by cripples miraculously cured: do the "cigarette butts heaped in ashtrays" signify that the smokers have been similarly cured of their dependence on tobacco? If so, why are the butts described as "smouldering under their own ruin?" Is there some irony intended here? If so, where is it located, and how does it function?) The blurriness here, at times bordering on incoherence, seems largely a consequence of the indeterminacy of the principle of selection governing the poem. The inclusion of the reference to talk about a suckling pig, for instance, seems justified only because it actually took place (though no doubt other things also took place during the actual scene described which are not included): its significance in the poem as a whole and even the mood which it is apparently intended to define remain unspecified.

One of the effects of such haziness of concep-

* University of Massachusetts Press, 95 pp., \$6.00.

tion is to diminish the urgency and force of Mr. Scully's mourning of Grandin Conover (1937-1969), a friend (himself a poet) to whom a number of the poems in this volume are addressed. But the peculiarly indecisive, half-hearted quality often in evidence here seems related less to technical irresolution than to a central and corrosive disbelief in the adequacy of poetry which is expressed most unambiguously at the end of the "Dead Letter":

*Meanwhile the rest of us survive
dreaming of poetry
as madmen dream they'll die in Jerusalem.
Only poetry's
hard on them, and children die of it
the older they get.
They're not up to it
the way friends or lovers are hardly ever
in tune with friendship or love.
Even the beautiful are too
heartsick for beauty,
astronauts will never make it to the stars
but burn up.
Justice
is equally murderous
dear Grandin.
Like poetry, poverty, like
a most unhappy life—
take even a poet
or any man. He is not up to it.*

This is one of the finest moments in *Avenue of the Americas*, and it makes clear the denial which will have to be overcome in Mr. Scully's future poetic assertions. So far as the present book is concerned, however, it may be taken as an index of the poet's own uneasiness about his recent work that the two best complete poems which appear here—"Chicken Country" and "Facing Up"—are reprinted from his earlier collection.

THE contents of seven previous collections by Frank Samperi are brought together in *The Prefiguration*,* a handsome volume published by Mushinsha of Japan in association with Grossman in New York. On the whole it is an interesting book, but one that might have been strengthened considerably by rigorous cutting: most of the poems here are conceived on the model of William Carlos Williams's version of imagism, and as the work of Robert Creeley also demonstrates, the Williams model can be a treacherous one, producing monotonous repetitions of the same "minimal" experience—or virtually indistinguishable variations of it—unless it is forced to bear the heavier burdens of feeling which Williams regularly placed on it.

Mr. Samperi's slighter accomplishments are inclined to be a little too reductive, and to rely

too heavily on ingenious typography in the manner of Cummings; but at their most vivid the poems included here present images thoroughly realized, images which combine the energy of movement with the momentary stillness afforded by detached perspective:

*Among
rocks
looking down
on nude bathers
gulls high
against sky
gulls low
against high
ships
against
blackness*

The effect of movement here is created by the rapid shifting of perspectives. Successive versions of the image—each incomplete—register on the mind's eye, then ultimately fuse to produce an illusion of substantiality and depth.

Some of Williams's bleakness is also evident in this collection, a bleakness related to the nagging perception of the unredeemed dead-level ordinariness of everyday existence:

*Today
we'll probably
go sit in the park
or maybe
on the bench
in front of
the bus stop
by the hospital
at least until
the sun goes
down*

Such notations reveal the suffocating emptiness of a life lived in full awareness of the passing of time, but denied the possibility of release from that awareness afforded by the aesthetic contemplation of experience. Significantly, the desire for release from a condition in which all change is regarded as a measure of decay figures centrally in two of the most intriguing (if at first glance atypical) items included in *The Prefiguration*: the two meditations on aesthetics which appear in the "Morning and Evening" and "Crystals" sections. Reminiscent of Stephen Dedalus's famous peripatetic discourse in the concluding chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, these prose passages are principally concerned with elucidating the notion of art as a means of living out of history, aesthetic contemplation as a means of experiencing one's development at one remove, in a way which is not bound by particular circumstances:

The new man is always the spiritual man.
We . . . conceive of contemplation as the

* Mushinsha/Grossman, unpagged, \$4.95.

activity which is wholly compatible with His City. . . . What we are trying to say is this: to live in God is to be contemplative.

It is wrong to think of contemplation as the opposite of activity: that is, contemplation is a prefiguration of the very activity that pertains to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the State that fosters the idea that contemplation is passive. . . .

Seen in relation to Mr. Samperi's poetry, such prose reflections suggest that there are two divergent conceptions of art in conflict in his work—the otherworldly and the worldly—derived chiefly, it would seem, from Augustine and Williams. Although his poetic practice inclines toward the imagist notation of Williams, Mr. Samperi's assumptions about the nature of artistic experience tend to undercut that model. The Williams manner, after all, implies a view of art as no more than a momentary stay against confusion: reconciling himself to the chaos of daily experience ungoverned by an all-embracing principle, insisting that there are "no ideas but in things," the poet is content to kill time by watching his experience gather in beautiful if inconclusive patterns on the page, taking shape tentatively in a series of fragmentary observations striving toward completed vision. In the Augustinian view, on the other hand, the elements of actual experience are devalued except insofar as they serve as emblems of spiritual realities: to achieve a complete sense of the progress of one's life one must see it directly in relation to a divine principle of order which provides an immutable standard for determining what is permanent and valuable (as opposed to what is transitory and therefore worthless) in experience.

Since Mr. Samperi is not wholly satisfied with either one of these alternatives, his poetry and prose reflections tend to counterbalance one another; but the range of imaginative possibilities embodied in his work is ultimately limited by his conviction that experience possesses aesthetic validity only to the extent that it has been purified of human grossness and particularity and pared down to correspond to abstract models of feeling.

IN CONTRAST, Sandra Hochman's *Earthworks, Poems 1960-1970** must be understood as the poetic record of ten years of a life committed to the turbulence of time, a life in which the self demands continual redefinition and renewal in the conditions of the moment. *Earthworks* represents Miss Hochman's own selection of some one hundred and fifty poems which originally appeared in her previous books (*Manhattan Pastures*—the Yale Younger Poets selection for 1963—*Voyage Home*, *The Vaudeville Marriage*, and *Love Letters from Asia*). The

poems included here, intelligent, humane, true to the intimate shapes of feeling, reflect a movement from a confused sense of imprisonment to a freedom associated with finding oneself at home at last in the natural world—a world no longer imagined as a claustrophobic kingdom of blind force, but as a region of expansive vistas ruled serenely by the eye. "Living new lives/ Above sea level," Miss Hochman writes, "We have forgotten/ Undersea landscapes":

*Slowly we came to this gentle place,
Walking past stones, trees,
Dry earth, shacks, layers of garbage,
And were stared at
By hill people. . . .*

* * *

*Once water was necessary. We farmed the sea,
Hauling out food
From salinity. Mud, fish
Gave us our lonely lives. Waves and the tides—
Starfish, scallops,
Crabs, mussels, sea pork,
Rockweeds, and shells sharp as razors—
Gave us our living.
Now we no longer dream of sea palms,
Our memories have burned out sharks,
The feeding frenzy of killers.
We have ascended through sea weather
To the top of this mountain. Here grass
Blows in green waves,
Light falls on our mouths like rain, and
Nets of white cloud tighten around our lives. We
Are free of the extremity of the sea! Free
To live with our calm self-nature. Now—*

The old tangled nets, associated with enslavement as well as survival, are now "nets of white cloud," a paradoxical image of openness and freedom (and to the extent that such nets are seen to "tighten around our lives" one which suggests protection and a safe means of being drawn up even further "above sea level"); similarly, the waves of dim, uncontrollable feeling which menace the earlier poems—and which are associated in this one with "undersea landscapes"—are now seen as green waves of grass, out in the open and inviting: a secure place of rest.

Though very different in tone and intention, the earlier poems possess their own considerable virtues, and their jagged, mercurial character is no less worthy of acceptance than the more obliging serenity of the *Love Letters from Asia* (in which "Above Sea Level" appears). Dominated by unmanageable loneliness and a restless, tense seductiveness which alternates at times with an aggressive impulse to withdrawal, these poems explore blind alleys of feeling, defunct possibilities for sustained human contact. The state of extremity produced by such painful realizations is only exacerbated by the conditions of city life in these early poems, and those conditions consequently come to be experienced as forms of personal assault:

* Viking, 210 pp., \$10.00.

*Do you understand what Manhattan is like?
Phones ring at night. There is dog turd
Everywhere.
Everywhere there is filth, noise,
Disregard of silence. The wire and the sound
Of banging bells
Are all over my nightgown and my shoes.*

As these lines (as well as the passage from "Above Sea Level") would suggest, in all of Miss Hochman's poems emotions tend to be regarded as an aspect of place, and new experience therefore demands a change of physical location. Thus, although the first of her collections is entitled *Manhattan Pastures*, that title must be taken as ironic: far from evoking the possibility of urban pastoral, again and again these early poems confirm the inflexible emotional limits imposed by the city block. "How we long/ For movement in this landscape," Miss Hochman writes, and that longing suggests how thoroughly the sense of self remains bound by immediate circumstances. Since possibilities of feeling associated with one place (whether temporal or geographical) cannot be rediscovered in another, there seems to be no way of awakening to a changing sense of familiar surroundings; movement therefore becomes a painful necessity, and the wholeness of experience can be grasped only in retrospect.

And it is because it provides just such a retrospective view that *Earthworks* achieves a large measure of success. For while the poems in each section here afford their own distinctive pleasures, what is significant about this comprehensive collection taken as a whole is that it reveals a generosity and range of feeling which no single one of Miss Hochman's earlier volumes begins to suggest. Consequently, *Earthworks* establishes itself as something more than an arbitrary compendium; by placing all of Miss Hochman's work to date in a long perspective, it makes it possible to measure the impressive distance she has traveled in only ten years.

ROCHELLE OWENS's *I Am The Babe of Joseph Stalin's Daughter** also collects ten years of the author's work in poetry (1961-71), but with less positive results. (In recent years Miss Owens, who was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1971, has become more widely known as the author of a series of controversial plays including *Futz* and *Beclch*.) Although this new book is possessed of an undeniable ferocity, its impact is diminished by the arbitrary (or at least unclear) arrangement of the poems included, and the narrowness of their range. As a result, the eruptions of energy tend to run into one another, and the effect of the individual poems is blurred.

But there are other problems too, problems

related to the book's programmatic unpleasantness and to the often vicious sentiments which it tends to espouse. To begin with, Miss Owens is very much concerned with the prerogatives of power, and she often seems inclined to regard poetry simply as a form of coercion:

*the best poets are the
ones who are always
head &
shoulder above
the
little guys/ the guys very eagerly
protest
their tiny state of
being/ rose rose I love
you I have never been out of
desire
for
thee! cry the best poets in the western world
who comprise
the
best people
from all
sexes.
I have forced a maiden
to the ground
made her wrists sweat
& her behind
wet!*

The political implications which usually attach to celebrations of aggressiveness of this kind seem familiar enough; among the poetic consequences of such sentiments are the frequent adoption of a stance which identifies the person to whom the poem is addressed as a probable enemy and the heavy reliance on a rhetoric which vilifies and/or vows revenge against him or her. (Hence such titles as "A Poem for Jewish Collaborators Who Betray Their Ancestral Homeland Israel" and "Wild Woman's Resentment of Fakery.") A high proportion of the poems involves some explicit form of denunciation, and in some the denunciation is coupled with the threat of violence—as in the case of "Purple Worms of Vengeance," for example, which takes the form of a grisly call to action:

*Chicano! Chicano!
Now! R E V E N G E
congressman's digested sweet
sweetly
sweetest apple/ sweetest plum/
has turned
like a fat worm/
into a plastic-
evil
hand-grenade/
chockful o' good eatin' worms/ purple
worms
that stuff on congressman's guts/
on his blond white children's guts/
on the president of america's guts
on guts of those that make small children
shrink in death. . . .*

* The Kulchur Foundation, 140 pp., no price indicated.

Such works speak for themselves, as does the poem dedicated to Sirhan Sirhan and entitled "Achtung! LeRoi the Sudanese Half Comprehends Your Anger" (which reads in part: ". . . I/ alone of the Jews understand/ your hunger strike!/ Your black flower eye/ blasting a prayer to Allah/ Your death blow on the heart of Golda/ Allen Meir Ginsberg/ Fat hermaphrodite Jew/ dropping from the cross!"). The underlying intention of such utterances is to shock, unsettle, and disgust the reader, to confound his sense of detachment and moral security by assaulting his sensibility, violating his sense of taste, and overstepping what he sees as the proper limits of poetic discourse (here implicitly regarded as a special category of political discourse).

Precedents for writing defined by such intentions exist throughout the history of literature, of course, but it is only in the modern period that insistence on the artist's preeminent obligation to maintain an adversary role in relation to the values and moral standards of his society has been used to justify any manner of abuse. The latter-day model which seems most closely related in tone and spirit to Miss Owens's work is Pound: the Pound of the "Usury" cantos and the saber-rattling "Sestina: Altaforte," the Pound of the BLAST denunciations. But the most arresting moments in Miss Owens's work actually occur when the haranguing stops: those moments of sudden unanticipated hurt, for instance, when the live experience is intense and intimate enough to resist absorption into the bewildering tangle of ideological patterns which have been constructed to contain it.

IF Miss Owens's work reveals the limitations inherent in the offensive stance, a contrasting uncertainty about precisely where to stand in relation to the reader tends to undermine Rochelle Ratner's *A Birthday of Waters*.^{*} But though they seem somewhat remote and disconnected at times, these poems possess the unquestionable authority of deep emotion carefully explored. Scorning familiar poses, they are acts of intense concentration which attempt to represent, through precise (albeit at times mysterious) notation, the ambiguous texture of feeling seized at the borders of consciousness. Consider "The Windows," for example:

*Opened
like greeting cards, yet
colorful, a thin arm
on my shoulder, chapping
lips at my side, my
glance a distinction:
she is the father, she,
she is, herself. I hold
her arm up to the light
with a piercing, like
a heavy weight*

*or stones rolled from the steps
or stones found in the grass
hidden from themselves between our watching.
It seems I have given her thread.*

*I see sweaters. I contain
all the memories
and the fanatic lights of the water.
Again the glow of a rifle
hurts my ears. A collar of white birds
flies over us, flying in twos.*

As these lines indicate, Miss Ratner's poems generally take the form of chains of association; at their most compelling, they achieve a vividness and strangeness reminiscent of the Austrian poet Georg Trakl—but a Trakl drained of color, shadowy and more severe. Yet the somberness peculiar to *A Birthday of Waters* seems related less to abrupt transitions and violent transformations than to a quality which might properly be described as gothic: for almost invariably these poems record specific sensations and perceptions which serve to reinforce a central but unspecified sense of apprehension. As a consequence, the experience of reading them is often like that of finding oneself alone in an isolated room of a dark and unfamiliar house, listening to the inexplicable movements of unseen figures on the floors below: the mysterious thuds and murmurings produce a growing fear that the imprisoned emotion—the hidden emotion, the emotion defined only obliquely by its effects—will at any moment break through the wall of consciousness and bring the house down.

This pervasive effect is primarily a function of the vagueness of outline of many of the poems, and as might be expected there is frequently a question about the degree to which that vagueness is deliberate; at times it suggests that the poem is not entirely under control, and all too often it results in a dissipation of emotional energy, a diffuseness of feeling. It is no accident that the most frequent weaknesses in Miss Ratner's book should be structural, the result of a failure to find a form completely equal to the task of keeping the poetic experience intact and consistently intelligible: for like the veiled diction which is characteristic of these poems, their unstable structure often reflects an inability to sustain an awareness of an audience (if only an imagined one) to whom these utterances might conceivably be addressed. Still, although many of the poems in this volume are imperfectly realized, their cumulative effect lingers, a dark presence in the mind, long after their precise contents have been forgotten.

IN CONTRAST, Anne Waldman's *No Hassles*[†] takes for granted an unusually well-defined, clubby,

^{*} New Rivers Press, 85 pp., \$2.50 (paper).

[†] The Kulchur Foundation, 121 pp., no price indicated.

and indulgent audience; true to its title, it is a collection which makes even fewer demands on the reader than it did on the author and which it is consequently possible to forget even while one is turning its pages. Like background music at the supermarket or the white sound of talk on an all-the-news-all-the-time radio station barely audible behind the luncheonette counter, the language in this book fails to establish itself as anything more than an incidental aspect of an activity which is to be evaluated by other standards. Indeed, in this case the activity itself—the making of poems—is regarded as incidental to a state of being: that state of election (which seems to require no visible sign of any particular skill for its corroboration) which has come to be known as Being Creative:

Once the President came to visit. I hated him. He was a horrible President, always making war on everyone.

He said to me, "Anne? Your country calls!" "Get lost," I said, "I'm a poet."

One of the things made plain by this rather grandiose little fiction is that it is not the actual involvement in the difficult process of writing poems (much less the quality of the poems produced) that is regarded as evidence of superior virtue and awareness, but simply the effortless advocacy of the idea of being a poet. What follows from this familiar presumption is an entirely predictable aversion to the sense of the poem as a deliberate construction rather than a high sign merely intended to testify to a general way of regarding oneself. In "Alive in Life," for instance, Miss Waldman writes: "To be printed in a book, read, digested/ isn't the life of a poem/ No, no! Not that!" And "Balk," printed on the same page, reflects the impatience with completed works—as well as conversations related to such works which inevitably results from regarding literary creation as an activity whose chief object is an emotional one:

*All this talk of books books books
BAH
When you're down & out, who needs it?*

No Hassles is appropriately subtitled "An Unhinged Book in Parts"; indeed, made up of "poems, stories, heartaches, collaborations, comics & photographs," and incorporating art-work and improvisations produced by other people in association with the author, it resembles nothing so much as one of those games and puzzles books that used to be given to children to keep them amused on weekends. And like all such miscellanies Miss Waldman's book can be diverting at times: it contains some poems of limited but genuine charm (e.g., the "Memoirs of an Elephant"), as well as gossip of the New York School and its affiliates, autobiographical disclosures regarding fallen underwear and related embarrassments, and a

New Nostalgia list of one hundred typical memories that will help to pass the time about as profitably as any inventory of a child's closet ("English muffins & cokes at Blynn's," "smoking in the girls' room," "Ike," "Dream, Dream, Dream," "Roy Rogers & Dale Evans Madison Square Garden," "'Korea,'" "air raid," "dog tags," etc.).

Because so much of what is included here is indebted to other people in one way or another, however, and because in tone and general demeanor *No Hassles* relies so heavily on the more facile and uninteresting aspects of the style identified with the New York School—the studied ingenuousness, the arch exuberance and bafflement—in the end the book appears virtually anonymous. And more than anything else it is this obliteration of poetic identity by prefabricated style which makes the effect of these works so ephemeral.

TAKEN as a whole, Joe Brainard's *Selected Writings** has a similarly unsatisfying odds-and-ends aspect, but because it is the expression of an individual rather than a collective personality it is a more rewarding book. Assembling writings composed between 1962 and 1971, the collection often takes the form of a journal, and Mr. Brainard's engaging openness makes it convincing as a chronicle (although a rather discontinuous one) of personal and artistic development; haunted by suspicions of inadequacy and a recurring fear of failure, the confessional pieces included generally avoid self-glorification and reveal a striving for unselfconscious human contact which the author associates with the late Frank O'Hara, whose influence is in evidence here in a variety of ways. "If this writing is a bit boring," Mr. Brainard observes at one point, "it's because I'm in a very in-between state of mind these days. I feel very much on the verge (at last) of being a little more free of myself. But not quite. I mean . . . less nervous, and more human. More vulnerable. It may be a perverse thing to want, but that's what I want. I want to be more vulnerable. Frank O'Hara. I think often of the way Frank O'Hara was. If I have a hero (I do) it is Frank O'Hara."

In addition to the diary entries, *Selected Writings* includes a long series of "Selections from *I Remember*" (a list finally almost as irritating but still considerably more absorbing than its counterpart in Anne Waldman's book) which serves a limited autobiographical function. But not everything collected here is autobiographical, either in substance or intention: there are stories, meditations, character sketches, an entirely expendable TV commercial for Colgate dental cream, bits of advice, recipes, and art appreciations as well (" . . . I like Andy Warhol. I like Andy Warhol. . . . And that is why I like

* The Kulchur Foundation, 121 pp., no price indicated.

here reveal a mordant lyricism, a sustained concentration, and a sureness of execution which make them worthy of attention.

BUT in the end it must be said that none of the books discussed here can be considered in a class with John Ashbery's *Three Poems*,* a book whose symphonic sweep and richness take it far out of the realm of possibilities defined by most recent American poetry and place it in the great romantic line which runs from Wordsworth to Wallace Stevens. To begin with, except for minor works like Eliot's "Hysteria," the three poems which make up this new volume are probably the only completely successful prose poems ever written in English, and in view of the scale on which they are executed ("The New Spirit" runs some fifty pages, "The System" fifty-three, and "The Recital"—a kind of coda—eleven pages) this alone would constitute an extraordinary achievement. But the technical breakthrough—which really amounts to nothing less than the invention of the form in English—is never made to call attention to itself: it is simply taken for granted, as if it represented a way of using words that had always been available and in plain sight.

In general, the language of the *Three Poems* is enormously restrained; it never strives for dazzling immediate effects, which would agitate the verbal surface excessively and consequently interrupt the sustained poetic discourse. The language does its work gradually, so that the appearance of the picture changes and moods succeed one another almost imperceptibly, without the reader's ever being aware of the precise moment of transformation. As a result, the poems have that quality of daydream associated with watching the clouds moving through the sky: the perfectly familiar and apparently textureless language is made to reflect changing inner states in the same way that the sky reflects changes in the weather, now darkening, now brightening, now becoming more turbulent, now flattening and becoming more serene. This fluidity of language is inseparable from the book's primary intention, which is to establish vital connections between ostensibly discontinuous realms of experience, to show how easily the ordinary may come to be seen as the transcendent, as incomparably rich and strange:

Certainly the whiff of nostalgia in the air is more than a hint, a glaring proof that the old irregular way of doing is not only some piece of furniture of the memory but is ours, if we had the initiative to use it. I have lost mine. It has been replaced by a strange kind of happiness within the limitations. The way is narrow but it is not hard, it seems almost to propel or push one along. One gets the narrowness into

one's seeing, which also seems an inducement to moving forward into what one has already caught a glimpse of and which quickly becomes vision, in the visionary sense, except that in place of the panorama that used to be our customary setting and which we never made much use of, a limited but infinitely free space has established itself, useful as everyday life but transfigured so that its signs of wear no longer appear as a reproach but as indications of how beautiful a thing must have been to have been so much prized, and its noble aspect which must have been irksome before has now become interesting, you are fascinated and keep on studying it. We have broken through into the consequences of the grey, sagging flesh that was our due, and it is surface enchantment, healing to the eye and to the touch.

As such luminous passages indicate, what the *Three Poems* record is the process of awakening in the present, an awakening seen as indistinguishable from entry into the endless dream of possibilities implied by things as they are.

This quality of waking dream ("Have I awakened? Or is this sleep again? Another form of sleep?") suggests something of Mr. Ashbery's debt to Dante, but that debt is indicated in a number of other ways as well. The first of the poems, for example, entitled "The New Spirit," is evidently patterned on the *Vita Nuova*. Concerned with spiritual renewal, it too alternates passages of prose reflection with lines of verse which have the effect of excursions into music. A reference on the second page to "the middle of the journey," however, as well as numerous extended similes throughout the work, make it clear that Mr. Ashbery also has the Dante of the Comedy in mind, the Dante of the allegory of salvation.

In "The System" the spiritual journey is concluded ("Today your wanderings have come full circle") and the poet reenters the world of time: "But that is the wonder of it: that you have returned not to the supernatural glow of heaven but to the ordinary daylight you knew so well before it passed from your view, and which continues to enrich you as it steeps you and your ageless chattels of mind, imagination, timid first love and quiet acceptance of experience in its revitalizing tide. And the miracle is not that you have returned—you always knew you would—but that things have remained the same. The day is not far advanced. . . . The person sitting opposite you who asked you a question is still waiting for the answer. . . ."

Addressing itself to "the pragmatic and kinetic future," the last of the *Three Poems*, entitled "The Recital," explores the implications of this vision of daily experience as a realm of continuous revelation; in so doing, it inevitably comes to reflect (in a manner recalling Wordsworth, who is quoted here) on the persistence of childhood as that state in which the self ceaselessly demands the world for its completion. Echoing

* Viking, 118 pp., \$5.95.

the first two poems, "The Recital" begins with a reference to awakening from sleep; with its final sentences, it brings the book to a close like the curtain speech in a late Shakespearean comedy, leaving a quickened sense of possibility alive in the air as sleep returns: "The performance had ended, the audience streamed out; the applause still echoed in the empty hall. But the idea of the spectacle as something to be acted out and absorbed still hung in the air long after the last spectator had gone home to sleep."

The visionary intensity of the *Three Poems*, the wonderful fluency and exquisite modulation of their language, are triumphs immediately perceived, but not the least remarkable quality of the book is the delicacy of its wit, which gives a fine cutting edge to its assertions and keeps them from becoming tediously earnest in the manner of much romantic exhortation. Thus, describing those deluded souls who believe that they have actually achieved a state of permanent grace in this world, Mr. Ashbery observes: "Hence the air of joyful resignation, the beatific upturned eyelids, the paralyzed stance of these castaways of the eternal voyage, who imagine that they have reached the promised land when in reality the ship is sinking under them." And at one point the poet launches into an address in the Augustinian manner to the soul seized with trepidation:

As a lost dog on the edge of a sidewalk timidly approaches first one passerby and then another, uncertain of what to ask for, taking a few embarrassed steps in one direction and then suddenly veering to another before being able to ascertain what reception his mute entreaty might have met with, lost, puzzled, ashamed, ready to slink back into his inner confusion at the first brush with the outside world, so your aspirations, my soul, on this busy thoroughfare that is the great highway of life. What do you think to gain from merely standing there looking worried, while the tide of humanity sweeps ever onward, toward some goal it gives

every sign of being as intimately acquainted with as you are with the sharp-edged problems that beset you from every angle? Do you really think that if you succeed in looking pathetic enough some kindly stranger will stop to ask your name and address and then steer you safely to your very door?

It is in this way that epic, romantic, and meditative conventions are adapted to the requirements of the work, fitted to its resolutely unexaggerated perspective; but it should be pointed out that these conventions are never used simply ironically, for in addition to being regarded as perfectly valid ways of comprehending experience they function as a means of defining the true scope of the poetic ambition embodied here.

CLEARLY conceived under the pressure of the contemporary situation in which "certain younger spectators felt that all had already come to an end, that the progress toward infinity had crystallized in them," *Three Poems* may also be seen as representing the full realization of intentions first indicated (although on a much smaller scale) by the poet in earlier works like "The Suspended Life" and "The New Realism" (in *The Tennis Court Oath*), and developed further in "Clepsydra" and "The Skaters" (*Rivers and Mountains*) and the more recent "Parergon" and "Fragment" (*The Double Dream of Spring*). But this new volume marks more than an epoch in Mr. Ashbery's own career; it establishes itself as one of the dozen or so genuinely important books of poetry published in America in the past fifty years. In addition, it provides an experience rare in this century: the experience of meditative verse worthy of comparison with the best of Stevens and Auden and Eliot's *Four Quartets*. A magisterial achievement from the standpoint of technique, *Three Poems* is also an unforgettably beautiful book, one in which visionary power, while refusing to give up the world as it is, succeeds in bringing into being a new world of feeling in its place.

The Greeks, the Romans & Captain Dreyfus

Milton Himmelfarb

LADY BEACONSFIELD said she never could remember which came first, the Greeks or the Romans. Because I studied Latin before trying to learn a little Greek, for me the Romans came first. And peculiarly, it was through the Romans and their literature rather than the Bible that I first began to *feel* how old the Jews are.

One of the Ciceronian orations I read as a student was the Pro Flacco. Flaccus was a Roman governor in Asia, on trial for having exceeded the norm of gubernatorial rapacity. Defending him, Cicero asks for a change of venue. The Jews, he says, have a grudge against Flaccus, over a matter of gold they had meant for the Temple (which was not to fall until more than a century had passed); and the mob, especially the Jewish mob, hangs out where the trial is taking place. "You know," Cicero argues, "how numerous the Jews are, how they stick together, how important the Jewish vote is"—*quantum valeat in contionibus*.

It was almost contemporary. If that sort of thing was not being said aloud very much any more, it was still being thought. A generation earlier it had been said aloud, by intellectuals and police. For Cicero the Jews of Rome were hardly more alien and disquieting than the Jews of New York for Henry Adams, Henry James, and Police Commissioner Theodore Bingham. Those New Yorkish Jews of Cicero's Rome, though closer in time to Abraham than we to them, were already about as far from Moses as we are from Hengist and Horsa, as far from David as we from William the Conqueror. If I had known that the passage in Pro Flacco is the earliest reference to Jews in Latin literature, it would have made an even stronger impression on me: the first time a Roman writer mentions us, he worries about the Jewish vote! Cicero was not taught to dislike us in church or in parochial school. He is pre-Christian.

In a Horace course we read two (of the three) poems in which he uses the word Jew. In one poem Horace says, "Let Apella the Jew believe it, I won't"—*it* meaning superstition. In the other he asks, "Do you want to offend the circumcised Jews?"—a genteel rendering of *vin tu curtis Iudaeis oppedere?* Horace, too, is pre-Christian.

Since I was also studying Jewish history, I knew about an annotated collection, in Greek and Latin with French translations, of everything the pagan Greek and Roman authors had written on the Jews and Judaism—Théodore Reinach's *Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au judaïsme*. It has been reprinted, and is a useful book to own.

It is useful not only for ancient but also for modern Jewish history, having a preface by Reinach which suggests almost as much about him and other modern Jews as his collection tells about antiquity. The book was published in 1895, with the preface dated November 1894. The Dreyfus case had broken in October 1894.

The Dreyfus case—anti-Semitism; and anti-Semitism not in "medieval" Russia, nor even in politically backward and culturally reactionary Germany, but in France, which had just celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the great Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man. It was in large part because of the Dreyfus case that Herzl underwent his fateful change. Herzl published his *Jewish State* in 1896 and presided over the First Zionist Congress in 1897.

Noting that Jews first appear in Greek literature shortly after Alexander the Great and in Latin literature with Cicero, Reinach says that the pagan writers are indispensable to our knowledge of Jewish history in those times, for want of Jewish sources. The rest of the preface follows, in condensed translation or in paraphrase:

This compilation (Reinach writes) also allows us to follow the course of Greco-Roman opinion about Jews for six centuries. The destiny of peoples, like that of individuals, depends in large measure on the sympathy or antipathy they evoke; especially the destiny of the Jews, whose political subordination made their very existence dependent on the good or bad will of their masters or neighbors. The ancients' opinions of the Jews and Judaism have been transmitted, as part of the heritage of classical civilization, to the Christian church and modern states. This scornful sentence in Tacitus, that accusation by Posidonius or Apollonius Molon, finds an echo in our day; and a scribbler in the employ of an anti-Semitic rag could be Apion come to life again.

Prejudices put into circulation two thousand years ago inspire anti-Jewish laws and persecutions now.

USUALLY, classical literature is unfavorable, indeed contemptuous, toward the Jews and Judaism, Reinach observes. But that was not always so. Nearly all the ancient authors were freethinkers, partial to a kind of vague monotheism or pantheism that they were able to reconcile in practice if not in theory with the polytheism of the masses. How could they not have respected the Jews, who had arrived at an idea of God as elevated as that of Greek philosophy? The simplicity and moral purity of the Jews' belief, the austere grandeur of their worship, their unremitting and zealous study of the Torah, which superficially seemed so akin to metaphysical speculation—in the beginning these aroused the interest and admiration of the Greek philosophers. Similarly favorable attitudes are also to be found in Roman literature.

But very quickly other features of Judaism evoked hostility: *religious particularism* and *social particularism*.

No one objected (the preface continues) to the Jews having their own God, but why should they deny the existence of other gods? Since Anaxagoras and Socrates, the philosophers had known how to pay lip service to the gods. What right had the Jews to show themselves more philosophical than the philosophers? The Jews had the arrogant bad taste to make of the universal God their own particular God, and to seek to impose Him on the other nations together with all the local, national forms that marked His worship in Jerusalem. When, as a natural consequence of their intransigent monotheism, the Jews refused to take part in the worship of the deified emperors, Jewish religious particularism began to look like rebellion and treason. For Apion the Jews were simply atheists, and at a certain period in the history of Roman legislation the crime of "Judaism" was so characterized.

What is more, the religious law of the Jews embraced their entire life in a web of distinctive observances which not only made them different from others but also separated them in daily life. Haman could have been the spokesman of most educated pagans (Esther 3:8):

Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus: "There is a certain unassimilated [*meforad*: separated, apart] people scattered amongst the peoples in all the dominions of your empire, whose laws are different from those of every other people and who do not keep Your Majesty's laws. Consequently it is not fitting for Your Majesty to tolerate them."

Educated Greeks preached the abolition of all differences, the fusion of all peoples, the unification of the world—provided, of course, that these things were done under the auspices of Hellen-

ism. Though with the same ambition, Reinach says, the Jews were a small minority. While waiting for the world to be converted to their Law and their way of life, the Jews wanted at least to protect their own individuality and the purity of their religion. They erected barriers around themselves because experience had taught them how seductive Greek civilization was, and how dangerous to Jewish faith, once the "hedge of observances" was overthrown. Jewish social particularism was an outgrowth of religious particularism. In order not to violate their religious laws, the Jews had to refuse to eat with pagans, take part in their games, serve under their banners, intermarry with them. Thus, though Jews might be Greek in culture and manners, they were perceived as alien.

Irritation with these unassimilated competitors expressed itself in pagan literature mostly by variations on the charge of *amixia*—keeping apart, clannishness. The pagan writers continued to level this charge against the Jews down to the end of paganism, centuries after the rise of Christianity. *Amixia* was easily transformed into *misanthropia*, hatred of the human race—an accusation which Christianity was to take over.

Everything else was secondary, Reinach believes. Racial anti-Semitism is the invention of modern pedants, economic anti-Semitism the product of medieval laws and modern industry and finance.

The first sharp attack on the Jews in Greek literature was by the Hellenized Egyptian priest Manetho (about 280 B.C.E.). According to Manetho, the Egyptian kings expelled the ancestors of the Jews because these were unclean lepers. For many centuries this tale was enormously influential. The Roman writers, who even in anti-Semitism were the faithful pupils of the Greeks, preferred it to all other accounts of the origins of the Jewish people.

For the pagans of the Hellenistic age the Jews were still unclean: dirty, smelling bad. The stupid, primitive Jews were simultaneously slavish and rebellious, obstinate and excitable, rash and cowardly. They were lustful, miserly, the scum of the earth. Their religion was a barbarous superstition, senseless and filthy. In their Holy of Holies they worshiped the golden head of an ass. According to Apion, every year they captured a Greek, fattened him, and sacrificed him to their God, and then feasted on his entrails. This is the origin of that slander of ritual murder which was to result in the shedding of so much innocent blood in the Middle Ages. Christianity should not have forgotten that it too was not spared this slander, as well as the slander of ass worship, when it first came into being.

To read these things, Reinach concludes, is painful but useful, for the history of prejudice is not the least important part of the history of the human mind. And he adds:

Yet not everything the ancients said about the Jews is prejudice, error, or calumny, and their criticisms may give us food for thought. When a philosophical historian notes how ancient and persistent certain allegations are, he will try to discern what they may contain of truth. The contemplation of the misunderstandings of former times will demonstrate even to the most cautious that emancipated Jewry has had both the need and the duty to reconcile loyalty to its religious tradition—our honor in the face of history—with thorough inward and outward assimilation to fellow citizens of other religions. Such an attempt was impossible or dangerous in ancient or feudal society, where, to a greater or lesser degree, religious practices embraced and penetrated all of political and civil life; but in a secularized society, like that which has emerged from the Revolution, this no longer represents either danger or serious difficulty. That is why assimilation has been victorious everywhere—at least where external causes have not delayed or still delay this inevitable development.

THUS Reinach. Though the word anti-Semitism had been coined less than twenty-five years earlier, in the 1870's, he uses it to characterize much of ancient writing. Many Jews have never heard of the pre-Christian, pagan origin of anti-Semitism. Mention it, and they will respond with astonishment or disbelief. Yet some hear the Megillah read every year, and have hissed Haman since childhood. Can it be that they take Ahasuerus for Constantine?

A classical scholar, and therefore familiar with earlier, less exhaustive compilations, Reinach knew when he began his work that he would find anti-Semitism in his material. Perhaps, though, he had not expected anti-Semitism to be quite so dominant—for the same reason that less learned Jews are surprised to hear that anti-Semitism existed at all in pagan antiquity. A devoted child of the Enlightenment, Reinach must have started with an assumption that the good, post-Socratic minds of pagan antiquity, uncontaminated by revealed religion generally and Christianity specifically, would be relatively free of prejudice and hate against the Jews.

By 1894 anti-Semitism, not only as a sentiment but also as an organized political movement, had been growing rapidly for a score of years. Mostly it was associated with the clerical Right. The secular Left, whether bourgeois or socialist, was less anti-Semitic. In Reinach's preface there may be a hint that he or someone like him had had the idea of compiling statements about the Jews in early Christian literature. Christian texts would certainly be not less poor in anti-Semitism than Reinach's pagan texts, but neither would they be overwhelmingly richer. The fathers of the Enlightenment had prided themselves on locating their spiritual and intellectual ancestry

in pagan antiquity instead of Christianity, but here was pagan antiquity not decisively different, for a Jew, from Christianity. Reinach himself tells us that in some measure Christian anti-Semitic literature derives from and depends upon earlier pagan literature, and that the anti-Semites of his day often were only repeating baseless lies first written down centuries before Christianity.

Reinach said this more than seventy-five years ago. It still holds. I know a woman who left Poland in 1969, with the publication of an article by Kazimierz Sidor, a high-ranking Communist, in *Soldier of Freedom*, the journal produced for the troops by the Ministry of Defense. In Sidor's Marxist interpretation of Jewish history, as set forth to the Polish soldiers of freedom, it is not true that Moses, at God's command, led out the children of Israel from the Egyptian house of bondage. Rather, the Egyptians expelled the Israelites because the Israelites were lepers.

Thus does a pagan Egyptian priest's hatred of the Jews 2,250 years ago become a Marxist's teaching today. As far as I know, among all the slanders against Jews in Christian literature—some, to repeat, of pagan origin—Manetho's slander does not appear. Manetho and Apion—it was against Apion that the first anti-anti-Semitic tract was written, by Josephus—owe their revival in our time to a so-called socialist who can have nothing but contempt for Christianity. Arthur Hertzberg's *French Enlightenment and the Jews*, which is about the 18th century, should have prepared us for the Polish Marxist enlightenment of the 20th century.

The most remarkable statement in Reinach's preface is his conclusion. Having noted how many of the things said by his classical authors are mere nonsense and lies; having demonstrated that what evoked the hatred and contempt of pagans toward Jews and Judaism was the Jews' determination to remain Jews; having implied that they could have escaped that hatred and contempt by ceasing to be Jews; having emphasized the continuity of ignorant and mendacious anti-Semitism from pre-Christian antiquity down to his own day—having done all this, Reinach concludes that there must be some truth to ancient anti-Semitism, and that *therefore* the Jews are under not only a prudential but also a moral compulsion to assimilate!

Reinach does not deny that we must remain loyal to our religious tradition. For him that is our honor in the face of history—which means, by implication, that not God but honor wants us loyal. Honor has replaced God. In an early biography of Moses Mendelssohn we read that Mendelssohn despised apostasy for reasons of honor, though he would gladly have joined his friend Lessing in a society where there were no longer either Christians or Jews. Apparently the

same can be said of Reinach, except that he would probably have preferred the company of the Frenchman Voltaire. But honor did not keep the Mendelssohns Jewish. Henri Bergson's grandchildren are Catholic. Michel Debré, the Catholic former prime minister of France, is the grandson of Rabbi Simon Debré, a prominent contemporary of Reinach's.

What is that unnecessary separatism which Reinach would have us abandon, both as an offense against citizenship in a secular society and as an impediment to our free association with our fellow citizens? No doubt he is thinking of such things as kosher food, and no doubt he thinks that if we discarded it we would be striking a blow against anti-Semitism. Presumably the grain of truth he sees in anti-Semitic accusations is that some Jews will eat nothing but kosher food.

Was it because of kosher food that the anti-Semite Drumont gained a huge following in France? The title of Drumont's book was *La France juive*, "Jewish France." Drumont and his fellow anti-Semites were not complaining that the Jews persisted in eating kosher food (few did), or praying in Hebrew (few prayed), or going to (or staying away from) synagogues rather than churches. The anti-Semites' complaint was that the Jews were too successful—by sneaky means, of course. Théodore Reinach does not caution the Jews against success. With his brothers Joseph (author of an *Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus*, in four volumes) and Salomon (author of the once famous *Orpheus: A History of Religions*), Théodore was conspicuously successful in academic and public life. The French Jews gloried in such successes as those of the Reinach brothers.

IN 1971 Oxford published *The Politics of Assimilation: A Study of the French Jewish Community at the Time of Dreyfus*, by the young scholar Michael R. Marrus.* An old lady is said to have been grateful to Gibbon for the wealth of pious sentiment he provided in the footnotes to his *Decline and Fall*. Not the least charm of Marrus's book resides in his quotations:

- A lady, explaining why she will not convert to Christianity: "I haven't enough religion to change my religion."
- A Jewish publicist: "Let there be neither Jews nor Christians except at the hour of prayer, for those who pray! That is what France proclaimed . . . by the Declaration of the Rights of Man."
- The author of a modern Jewish history, 1828: Judaism is "too Asiatic for European nations."

* 314 pp., \$12.75.

• A Jewish philosopher: The French Revolution is "our second law of Sinai."

• A Jewish historian: "The time of the Messiah had come with the French Revolution . . . which substituted for the old Trinity of the Church that other Trinity . . . 'Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!'"

• A rabbi: The Revolution is "our modern Passover."

• Another rabbi: France has been "designated by Him who directs the destinies of humanity to work for the emancipation of all the oppressed, to spread throughout the world the great and beautiful ideas of justice, equality, and fraternity which had formerly been the exclusive patrimony of Israel."

• Théodore Reinach, in his frequently reprinted *Histoire des israélites*: "Each country has the Jews that it deserves [= You made me what I am today, I hope you're satisfied]. . . . Every Jew today having heart and memory is a son of the France of 1791."

Marrus reports the universal belief of the French Jews (including Emile Durkheim) that anti-Semitism was not really French but something made in Germany, or actually a German plot against France. And he gives us the effusion of a Chief Rabbi of Paris to the effect that Jews and anti-Semites alike are loving sons to their mother France! Their conflict is in a sense only rivalry in love for her; but an unrestrained rivalry (and here the Chief Rabbi's language must not be denatured by summary) would "incur the risk . . . of afflicting her whom we encompass with our veneration, and—which would be even graver—of weakening, by the contrariety of our efforts, the efficacy of our filial tenderness and our devotion." That rabbi's name was Dreyfus. Could the homonymous captain be any less patriotic? Of the captain it was said that if he had not been Dreyfus he would have been anti-Dreyfus.

Most striking of all is the doctrine or outlook that Marrus calls Franco-Judaism, as expounded by James Darmesteter. The French-Jewish community admired Darmesteter for his synthesis of Jewish and French values, and orientalists throughout Europe considered him as a leader in their field. (His specialty was the Avesta.)

Marrus gives this abstract of Franco-Judaism:

. . . Darmesteter showed explicitly how the ideology of the French Revolution was in fact the ideology of Judaism. . . . Since the time of the Prophets Judaism had rested upon two great dogmas, dogmas which stood for the entirety of the religion. These were what he called "Divine Unity" and "Messianism." Each of these dogmas had its roots in an ancient biblical tradition; each of them, however—and this was Darmesteter's special contribution—had direct relevance to the modern world which had been ushered in in 1789. "Divine Unity," the biblical concept of monotheism, meant "the

unity of law in the world," or, in other words, the recognition that the world was ruled by scientific, lawlike principles, and not myth. Messianism, when applied to the world, meant a faith in the "terrestrial triumph of justice in humanity," the belief in progress and social betterment which was the mainspring of the Revolution. Divine Unity and Messianism were in this way the central doctrines of the Revolution . . . [and] the basis of the modern French state. . . . The Jews, in a sense, had no need to adapt themselves to the culture of France; to some extent at least, on the most profound level, the culture of France had adapted itself to Judaism. The point was that they were essentially the same. . . .

The new capital [of tomorrow's humanity], he felt, would not be Jerusalem, but Paris. . . . With what he believed to be the impending fulfilment of the promise of the Hebrew Prophets, Darmesteter was prepared to dissolve Jewishness in the "catholic union of the future," to be directed from France; his consolation for this, or perhaps his deference to Jewish history, was a recognition that the "catholicism" towards which the French were leading the world was in fact the moral equivalent of the ancient Hebrew faith. . . .

GERMAN Jews were just as patriotic, and they insisted that it was Germany which best fulfilled the spirit of Judaism. Eminent and distinguished the Darmesteters and Reinachs were, yet less eminent and distinguished than Hermann Cohen, a major philosopher as well as a major Jewish theologian. In the First World War Cohen published a pamphlet entitled *Deutschtum und Judentum* ("Germanism and Judaism"). A few years ago, in a Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Cohen's death, Emil Fackenheim presented Cohen's thinking on Germanism and Judaism (among other things):

According to Cohen's pamphlet a unique kinship exists between "Germanism" and Judaism. . . . On the one hand, Judaism is one root of Germanism (the other being Hellenism). . . . On the other hand, Judaism, having lost part of its native essence in the medieval Ghetto, could have regained that essence in its modern form only through German inspiration.

The essence of Germanism is ethical idealism. . . . The core of the many expressions of Germanism, for Cohen, are Kant and Schiller. . . . "What differentiates the German concept of mankind from the *humanité* of the French revolution is its ethical foundation. The 'mankind' of Germanism alone rests on the grounds of ethics."

Germanism, therefore, has universal significance for all mankind. The future it demands and inspires is universal—peace, socialism, internationalism—; its realization requires the ethical idealism which is the particular product of German-

ism. Germanism, therefore, is, in its unique particularity, "The teacher of the world."

Germanism is akin to Judaism: What Germanism has produced in modern art, poetry, and philosophy Judaism has possessed since ancient days, in the Messianic expectation. . . . "The [Jewish] Messiah was resurrected . . . in the German spirit." . . . Moses Mendelssohn . . . began to make "Germanism a life-force for Judaism". . . . His heirs, . . . inspired as they were and are by a German ethical idealism still dormant in Mendelssohn's time, have been enabled to be "as Germans, Jews, and as Jews, Germans." Indeed, so intimate is the kinship between Germanism and Judaism now that it may be said that Germany is the motherland, if not the fatherland, of all modern Jews.

"Germany is the motherland of all modern Jews." "Every Jew today is a son of France." At least four times a week, in the synagogue, Jews who pray repeat the prophecy in Micah (4:2) and Isaiah (2:3): "Torah shall issue from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." For French Jews, Paris was the new Zion and the new Jerusalem; for German Jews, Berlin. In the preface to his *Textes*. . . , Reinach is ironical about pagan annoyance with the Jews for their impudence in proclaiming that the universal Word issued from Zion/Jerusalem, when it was so obvious that the universal Word issued from Athens/Alexandria: your particularism isn't universalism, ours is. The same Reinach, like Darmesteter, cannot see this incongruity in the France of his own day, with its fancied universalism. About a universal mission of France they were not ironical. If they had been German, they would not have been ironical about a German mission.

All this is so preposterous and abject that it heightens our ever-present temptation to feel superior to the past, to be smugly confident that we would not have been so stupid. In a professorial joke about an earnest young student who is trying to master the art of imagining himself into the past, the student says: "If we the people had been living in the Middle Ages, we would have been serfs." If we had been living in France or Germany eighty years ago, we would have been followers of Darmesteter, Reinach, and Cohen. "What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed": we would have believed in Franco-Judaism or in Germano-Judaism.

In the United States we have had what Marrus might want to call Americano-Judaism. Are we not pleased by the Jewish flavor of the Puritans' Christianity? Do we not marvel at the "goodness of fit" between American and Jewish values? In explaining ourselves to ourselves, none of us forgets that the qualities necessary for getting ahead in America—seriousness, diligence, forethought, and so on; what President Nixon has been calling the work ethic, descended from what Max Weber

called the Protestant ethic—were the invisible imports that the Jewish immigrants brought with them from their Old Countries.

In England the Jews must have believed in a harmony between Englishry and Judaism (for instance, regard for history and tradition); and in Italy, in a harmony between *italianismo* and *ebraismo* (the Mediterranean spirit, and all that). The Polonized Jews must have believed in a harmony between Polishness and Jewishness (Poland the Christ nation).

Nor has this sort of thing been only bourgeois. Even for Hermann Cohen, socialism was a link between Judaism and Germanism.

DARMESTER was glad to recognize messianism as Jewish and French, and Cohen to recognize it as Jewish and German. In the revolutionary tradition, which dismissed religion as the opium of the people, I used to think that messianism must be, derisively, pie in the sky. When I was growing up, the anarcho-syndicalist Wobblies were already moribund, but one of their songs remained very much alive:

*Oh, the preachers come out every night
And tell you what's wrong and what's right.
When you ask them for something to eat,
They reply, in voices so sweet:
"You will eat by and by,
In that glorious land above the sky,
Way up high.
Work and pray,
Live on hay.
You'll get pie
In the sky
When you die."
THAT'S A LIE!*

Revolutionaries were too tough-minded for messianic nonsense.

Judaism, poor thing, was messianic—one need not have heard of Darmesteter or Cohen to know that. Take the eleventh chapter of Isaiah (the central part of the Prophetic lesson for the last day of Passover):

A shoot shall grow from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch spring from his roots.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
a spirit of wisdom and understanding,
a spirit of counsel and power,
a spirit of knowledge and fear of the LORD. . . .
He shall judge the poor with justice . . .
and with a breath of his lips slay the wicked. . . .
Wolf shall dwell with lamb
and leopard lie down with kid . . .
and a little child shall lead them.
. . . lion shall eat straw like cattle.
Infant shall play over cobra's hole. . . .
They shall not hurt nor destroy
in all My holy mountain,
for the earth shall be filled with the
knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

Or, in Maimonides's dogmatic formulation (which a praying Jew knows from his prayer-book): "I believe with perfect faith in the Messiah's coming; and though he delay, nevertheless I will wait every day for him to come."

A Trotsky can make the messianic Isaiah seem almost down to earth. In *Literature and Revolution*, Trotsky leads up to this (most recently brought to our attention by Paul Blumberg in *Midstream* for November 1972):

Man will make it his purpose . . . to raise himself to a new plane, to create a . . . superman. . . . The average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge, new peaks will rise.

A Lukács can make Maimonides sound impatient and doubting. Georg Lukács died in June 1971 at the age of eighty-six, having lived through Stalinism (and acquiesced in it) and then through all those other splendid things that happened in Eastern Europe. In 1968, after the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, he had granted an interview to a former student, George Urban, for posthumous publication. It appeared in *Encounter* in October 1971:

Lukács said that in the short term the picture was perhaps [!] still gloomy, but he was concerned here with the broad trends of history. It would take centuries, if not thousands of years [Psalm 90:4: "For a thousand years in Thy sight/are but as yesterday when it is past,/or as a watch in the night"], for the good life based on reason to emerge, but he was certain that was the way in which man's consciousness was moving. There would be setbacks, but the main thrust of development was not open to change.

Not the old-fashioned kind of preachers but Trotsky and Lukács are preaching pie in the sky by and by. Trotsky and Lukács were, in Issaacs Deutscher's language, non-Jewish Jews. Karl Kautsky—Lenin's "Kautsky the renegade"—was a Gentile. But though a Social Democrat, and the object of Lenin's and all good Bolsheviks' wrath in another connection, Kautsky was even for them an undisputed Marxist authority on The Jewish Question. In the 1920's International Publishers, the American Communist publishing firm, brought out a translation of the second, postwar edition of his *Rasse und Judentum* ("Race and Judaism") as *Are the Jews a Race?* For the revolutionary, non-Jewish Jews, Kautsky was the teacher that Darmesteter and Reinach had been for the bourgeois French Jews, or Hermann Cohen for the bourgeois German Jews. In the American Communist edition Kautsky's last chapter is entitled "The Last Stages of Judaism." There he tells us:

Only a victorious proletariat can bring complete emancipation for the Jews; all of Jewry, except in so far as it is already fettered to capitalism, is interested in a proletarian victory. . . .

The Jews have become an eminently revolutionary factor, while Judaism has become a reactionary factor. . . . We cannot say we have completely emerged from the Middle Ages as long as Judaism still exists among us. The sooner it disappears, the better it will be, not only for society, but also for the Jews themselves.

The disappearance of the Jews will not involve a tragic process like the disappearance of the American Indians or the Tasmanians. . . . It will not mean a mere shifting of domicile from one medieval ruin to another, not a transition from orthodox Judaism to ecclesiastical Christianity, but the creation of a new and higher type of man.

"A new and higher type of man": messianism.

Lest even that should be insufficient to reassure would-be ex-Jews about their honor, this Marxist Gentile ends his book with words we might expect from a bourgeois Jew like Darmesteter:

. . . the Wandering Jew will at last have found a haven of rest. He will continue to live in the memory of man as man's greatest sufferer, as he who has been dealt with most severely by mankind, to whom he has given most.

In the worshipful hush left by the eschatology and messianism of Kautsky, Trotsky, and Lukács, even an infidel can be abashed. There are tender souls who cannot do without the opium of their Marxist-messianic religion, and it would be cruel to obtrude too much reality upon them.

Darmesteter, Reinach, and Cohen; Kautsky, Trotsky, and Lukács only teach us what we should have known all along: The most learned, the most gifted, the most intelligent can be ab-

surdly wrong. I do not think Hume was normatively right in saying that reason ought to be the slave of the passions, but I think he was factually right in saying that reason *is* the slave of the passions. The intelligent and learned find intelligent and learned pretexts for asserting as true what they wish were true. They easily fool themselves and everyone else who wishes to be fooled. We easily fool ourselves.

MARRUS mentions Ahad Ha'am only once, in passing. That is unfortunate. Though the judgment Ahad Ha'am passed on the Franco-Jews (and implicitly on the Germano-, Anglo-, Italo-, and Americano-Jews) was not the judgment of hindsight, our own hindsight—including Marrus's—can add little to it. Ahad Ha'am wrote his "Slavishness in Freedom" in 1891, to deny that the Emancipation of the French Jews had made free men and women of them, as they and their admirers delighted to insist; and that as they were, so should all Jews become. Emancipation, he said, had given the French Jews formal civil equality, but the price they kept paying for it, eagerly, was moral enslavement, or slavishness. Free men could not pretend to believe what the best minds of French Jewry pretended to believe. (One of his specimens is something of Reinach's.) The emancipated Jews of the West were less free than the unemancipated Jews of the Czar's domain.

Reinach and Darmesteter were Franco-Jews, Hermann Cohen was a Germano-Jew, Trotsky and Lukács were Marxist-messianic non-Jewish Jews. Ahad Ha'am was a Jew. He compels our respect, they solicit our understanding.

Disease as a Way of Life

Eric J. Cassell

IN all the recent talk about the "crisis" in medical care, a major concern—whether explicitly stated or merely implied—has been the disproportionate burden of disease borne by America's poor. The way in which to lift that burden, it has been generally assumed, is to provide more health services: better financing, more doctors, a greater application of technology. There can be no doubt that these services are necessary, nor that some form of national health insurance over and above the present system of Medicare is a matter of the utmost urgency. Yet in pressing for these goals we would do well to take a hard look at some of the assumptions behind the demand for better health services, lest in mistaking the true nature of the problem we lead ourselves to the wrong solution.

As Warren Winkelstein, Jr. has recently noted, there may in fact be good reason to dispute "the underlying belief among both the lay public and people in the technical professions that the quantity and quality of medical services are directly related to the health status of the population."^{*} As Winkelstein goes on to state, there is little evidence to support the assumption that the health of a population is primarily a function of its medical services, and much to contradict it.

To illustrate this contention, let us consider briefly the case of the

Navajo Indians, a poor and disease-ridden people that (beginning in 1955) was the object of study of the Navajo-Cornell Field Health Research Project. Working in close cooperation with the tribal leaders, the study group brought modern medical services to a part of the Navajo Indian reservation, providing a well-equipped ambulatory care facility, transportation, physicians and nurses, trained indigenous health aides, and access to hospital care. All of this was introduced into an extremely poor, non-literate environment, among people living in extended families in windowless one-room log-and-mud dwellings with dirt floors.

Both the Navajos and the study group were pleased with the day-to-day achievements of the technology and the delivery system that had been introduced into the reservation. Medical care—in the classical form of clinical physicians (a complete innovation for the Navajos when it was introduced)—was well received and utilized. "The system was set up with full community participation, and there was a mechanism for effective, continued community control."[†] And by objective criteria as well, quite apart from the issue of patient-satisfaction, the project had successes to report over the course of its five years of operation. Tuberculosis, a common problem among the Navajos, was sharply reduced, and, by the end of the study, so was the amount of significant ear infection among children.

But the really startling findings were on the negative side. Aside from the reduction in tuberculosis and ear infections, at the end of five years the investigators discerned no evidence of any real

change in the pattern or prevalence of disease. There was a possible slight diminution in the overall death rates, despite an infant mortality rate that persisted at three times the national average, but no reduction at all in the incidence of the diarrhea-pneumonia complex which remained the single greatest cause of illness and death among Navajo infants.

As the term "diarrhea-pneumonia complex" suggests, infants in the Navajo environment commonly suffered or died from a combination of respiratory and intestinal complaints that are not caused by any single bacterium or virus. Major contributing factors are malnutrition and poor sanitation. Nor, in general, are antibiotics helpful; the "normal" bacteria and viruses appear to get the upper hand and keep it. The disease, in other words, is in some sense a function of the way in which the Navajos lived and raised their infants. Thus, in general terms, the entire disease pattern of the tribe—unresponsive as much of it was to modern technology—could not be changed until basic changes took place in the tribe's way of life. In a social setting conducive to a particular pattern of disease, medical care alone—no matter how modern, well delivered, or technically complete—cannot be expected to lift the burden of sickness.

Our own past as a nation is further illustrative of this point. Everyone is aware of the profound changes that have occurred over the past two generations in the patterns of disease in America. Moreover, since the disappearance of the common infectious scourges of the past has been more or less

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^{*} "Epidemiological Considerations Underlying the Allocation of Health and Disease Care Resources," *International Journal of Epidemiology*, Vol. I, pp. 69-74, (1972).

[†] W. McDermott, K. Deuschle, and C. Barnett, "Health Care Experiment at Many Farms," *Science* 175, pp. 23-31 (1972).

simultaneous with the growth and development of modern scientific medicine and its technical wizardry, it is commonly believed that the dramatic improvement in the health of our society was brought about by the achievements of physicians and medical science. By and large, however, this is not true.

IN THE United States and other Western nations at the beginning of the 20th century the pattern of disease showed a high overall death rate (about 28 deaths per 1,000 population per year—the present rate is about 9 per 1,000 per year) with a certain monotony of cause: pneumonia and influenza, tuberculosis, typhoid fever, and the various dysenteries. Among infants the common killer was the same diarrhea-pneumonia complex we noted among the Navajos. Now, this high rate of mortality, as well as the specific pattern of diseases, was in part traceable directly to the urban social conditions brought on by the Industrial Revolution. Mass shifts of the rural poor into the cities had resulted in poverty, crowding, unbelievable filth, and poor sanitation, and had provided fertile ground for the transmission of disease. In the United States the problem was compounded by the continuous influx of poverty-stricken immigrants.

In 1900 the annual death rate from tuberculosis in the United States was 200 per 100,000. By 1960 the rate was 5 per 100,000. Throughout these sixty years the death rate fell rapidly and steadily, so that by the 1950's, when the first effective anti-tuberculosis drugs became available, the annual rate was *already* below 20 per 100,000. Prior to the advent of the new drugs, whatever treatment was available was frequently ineffective, and was restricted primarily to those who could afford it. It seems reasonable to speculate, then, in the absence of any clear evidence to the contrary, that the improvement in the mortality rates that took place before the 1950's was due in large part to improved living conditions, including better nutrition and diminished crowding. (It is also true of the infectious diseases like tuberculosis that

a falling rate promotes a further diminution in the disease, simply because the fewer the individuals carrying it, the lower the chances of contracting the disease through contact.)

As with tuberculosis, so with typhoid. After 1905 cases of typhoid fever became steadily less common in New York City, so that by the time effective drugs became available, typhoid was already a very rare disease. In years past it was usual to attribute the decrease to typhoid immunization, but we know now that the vaccine at best is not very effective; rather, the improvement can be traced to the introduction of good sanitation, to chlorination of the water supply, and to improvements in personal hygiene.

Perhaps the most gratifying change of all was the decrease in infant mortality during the early decades of this century in New York. By far the greater part of this decrease can be attributed to the sharp reduction in the diarrhea-pneumonia complex which "occurred before there were any antimicrobial drugs at all; neither were there any vaccines for this disease complex. . . . The fall occurred during a time in which biomedical science and technology could put no specific, no decisive therapies or preventatives into the hands of our clinical physicians."* Here again no single reason for the improvement can be pointed to, but it can be noted that it occurred during a period in which standards of living, education, nutrition, and sanitation all improved.

In like manner we are today protected against many food-borne diseases more by the pattern of our society than by anything specific we do for our health. It is the economics of modern food distribution, not considerations of health, which demands that foods be packaged and protected against spoilage or contamination. The rapid bankruptcy of a soup company that had produced a few cases of botulism illustrates dramatically how much more effectively health may be protected by the mass media than by food inspectors.

Of course, our present pattern of death and disease is not merely

what is left over after we have escaped the ravages of infectious diseases. Along with affluence and the good life has come a new pattern of disease: cancer, heart disease, stroke. Yet just as medical care played a minor role in reducing death rates in the past, so we should not expect that it alone will relieve us of our present burdens. In fact, after fifty years of consistent decline in the mortality rates, we witnessed in the 1960's a new upward trend, particularly among white males. The connection of a single personal habit—cigarette smoking—with one disease, lung cancer, seems proved. In the case of our worst epidemic, coronary heart disease, however, the chain of causations is more complex. Diet, level of activity, cigarette-smoking, stress, as well as other factors are so interrelated here that it is fair to say that a whole pattern of life is involved—the pattern characteristic of an affluent society. It would be naive to expect that medical science by itself can "cure" us of this condition. Even if present surgical techniques were perfected, the value of a new or revised heart in the body of a patient whose life pattern remains otherwise unchanged would not be very high.

THE general health of populations, then, is not directly dependent on medical services. Medical care did not get us out of our past troubles, and it will not get us out of our present ones. These propositions should be self-evident, yet the truth is that widespread confusion still remains on the subject. This is evidenced most strikingly by the continued use of infant mortality statistics in justification of proposed changes in the medical care structure.† Although the first year of life is the most hazardous single year in the human life span

* W. McDermott, "Environmental Factors Bearing on Medical Education in the Developing Countries," in *Manpower for the World's Health* (1966).

† See for example the introduction by S. Berki and A. Heston to "The Nation's Health: Some Issues," a special number of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 399 (1972).

until advanced old age, it is clearly more hazardous in some countries than in others. It is the apparent low showing of the United States in relation to a country like Sweden (24.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in the U.S. as against 14.2 in Sweden in 1963 [United Nations, 1967]) that distresses medical reformers. Mortality among black infants in America is almost twice as high as among whites; in certain New York ghettos infant mortality is three times the rate in more favored areas of the city.

The assumption is widespread that these differences reflect the inadequacy of the medical care provided in the United States as opposed to Sweden, or, within the United States, to the areas or groups with higher than average mortality rates. But this assumption does not stand up to close examination. The applicability here of the Navajo experiment cited above should be clear. For the Navajo Indians, the major factor determining the diarrhea-pneumonia complex and the high infant mortality was the pattern of tribal life, specifically the home environment; improved medical care did not, and could not alone, affect that pattern. (Nor, incidentally, could a program of what is generally called "health education," since health-associated learning would involve not merely the acquisition of facts but a change in world view. For example, teaching the importance of hand washing would require imparting not only some idea of germs, but also the basic belief that fate can be controlled—even supposing soap and water were universally available.)

As with the Navajo Indians, so with our society at large: the immediate environment is the crucial factor. This can be seen by examining infant mortality in relation to its influential determinants, such as age of mother, ed-

ucational level of mother and father, and family income—all regardless of race. In every instance the less well-educated and the poor carry the greatest burden of mortality. When a family income reaches \$5,000 per year, and the education of the parents runs through high school or beyond, the infant mortality rates become markedly lower. These findings hold true for whites and blacks although black mortality rates are consistently higher than those of whites.* Dr. M. Harvey Brenner of John Hopkins has recently concluded a study showing that periods of economic instability resulting in a rise in the unemployment rate have also been associated with a rise in the rate of infant mortality (New York Times, November 15, 1972). Further evidence of the direct bearing of social factors on infant mortality (and on other indices of health) is seen in California, where the Japanese and Chinese population consistently display better statistical indices of health than either whites or blacks, independent of income. Simply stated, disease is tied to the way of life.

POVERTY, at least when it comes to questions of health, means more than being without the money to purchase adequate medical care. Medicine, and medical care, will not by themselves eradicate the diseases of the poor. The British experience under the National Health Service, where access to physicians is open to all, is illustrative: the lowest social classes still bear more than their share of illness and disability. As one observer has remarked, "The National Health Service was conceived on the basis that, with the eradication of infection and deprivation of medical services, disease would become less common. This has not happened. Experience . . . reveals that over the years, the less affluent have continued to constitute a hos-

pital class. . . ."[†] Another example is afforded by the experience of the American military, where the same high quality of medical care is received by all dependents irrespective of rank. A study has shown that perinatal mortality increases with the decreasing military rank of the husband (in order to exclude the effect of race, only whites were included in the study).^{**}

In order to relieve the poor of their burden of disease, then, we must work to alleviate poverty itself, which is to say the way of life of the poor. The goal of a healthy society will not be reached simply by the infusion of massive amounts of money and other resources into the medical-care system, even if that system should be widely reorganized. It goes without saying that the poor, like everyone else, should be free to avail themselves of the best medical care this society can provide; access to the nation's medical services is a fundamental right. But it would be naive to suppose that medical services alone will relieve the poor of the burden of sickness which they disproportionately bear. It is the way we live that determines our health problems, and it is social change, not medical technology, that will help solve them. Without a clear understanding of what causes the disease patterns of a society and how those patterns are affected, even the best-intentioned health planning may go seriously awry.

* Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Health Statistics, *Infant Mortality Rates: Socio-economic Factors*, Series 22, No. 14 (1972).

† R. Kemp, "Morbidity and Social Class," in *The Lancet*, Vol. 1, No. 7503, pp. 1316-18 (1967).

** B. Nold, R. Stallones, and W. Reynolds, "The Social Class Gradient of Perinatal Mortality in Dependents of Military Personnel," *American Journal of Epidemiology* 83, pp. 481-88 (1966).

Arthur Miller's Eden

Jack Richardson

CHANGE is certainly one of the facts of a critic's life. Having been enthralled and perplexed by art for many years, and having struggled to find a useful articulation of his enthusiasms and dislikes, he discovers one day that his pleasures have been restructured, that his intellectual energies are no longer nourished by works that once earned his joy and approval. His opinion of a poet may be the same, but he finds that he can no longer read that poet's poems. Perhaps life has made the truths of the poems too evident; perhaps the critic has become too fragile to sustain the dilemmas they raise in his mind; perhaps he has simply outgrown their passions or their peculiar rhetoric. As I said, his judgment may remain unaltered; he can still, without any hint of hypocrisy, pronounce these verses "good." But they no longer belong to him in a special way, nor he to them. Only accident will bring them together in the future for an embarrassed meeting.

There is also another, mellow kind of change, something closer to resignation than to a violent alteration of sensibility. It is the amused acceptance of that which has outlasted the critic's rage. As one can finally tolerate and even grow fond of an ugly neighborhood building, so one can also come wearily to terms with an artist who has almost always proved himself abrasive in the past. One begins to admire, if nothing else, his endurance, to find something admirable in his continuing, in the face of one's absolute dismissal of his abilities, to offer again and again examples of a dull imagination and inept style. Finally, one comes to feel a morbid comradeship for such an artist, and it seems nothing but pettiness to go on dredging up bits of evidence for his indictment. After all, the man

has produced a large body of work, he does have his admirers, he has not created such absolute rubbish that criticism has no business wallowing in it at all. What is one doing, the critic thinks, railing against one particular example of human fallibility? Can there not be just a final parting of the ways in silence?

It was with this second, phlegmatic sense of critical duty that I went to see Arthur Miller's new play, *The Creation of the World and Other Business*. The play had already been fatally injured by the daily reviewers, and word-of-mouth gossip had led me to expect little enjoyment from this dramatic paraphrase of part of Genesis. Still, I was determined to greet this offering by the man the world considers to be America's leading playwright with nothing harsher than a little benign neglect, no matter how flawed it proved itself to be. I had raged too often against Arthur Miller in the past, and now, between his spirit and mine, I sought a *détente*. Indeed, I hoped I had at last reached that point in maturity where even the worst play could not provoke me into a diatribe against its author. As a critic, I was growing tired of squabbles, bored with defending the distinctions necessary for talking seriously about art's aspects. I was certain that *The Creation of the World and Other Business* would come and go in my life with no greater incident attached to it than my suffering a few hours' wonder about a society that believed Arthur Miller to be one of its important spokesmen. In short, I was a dangerously moribund critic. I was ready to understand and forgive everything, which is no better than the method practiced by so many of my colleagues—namely, to misunderstand and thus accept everything.

Well, I owe Arthur Miller my gratitude. With less than three hours of dramaturgy he rescued me from my lethargy and restored in me the desire to give a meretricious play no quarter. With each sentimental line, with each cute rendering of divine and mortal difficulties, Miller reawakened in me that wonderful feeling of anger that seems so inexplicable to those who do not believe art to be of earnest consequence. By the time he had finished with his interpretation of the creation and fall of man, all of my complacency had been purged, and it seemed a fine thing again to revive the charges that I had often made against him.

SOME TIME ago, in the middle of a harsh review of *The Price*,* I singled out *Death of a Salesman* as the one play in Miller's canon that is truly a success. I mentioned as a possible reason for this the fact that Miller had confined some of his heavier notions about human tragedy to the little essay that preceded the play's printed version and had allowed Willy Loman a dramatic existence unfettered by too much extraneous portent. To be sure, there was a bit of fustian lyricism in the play and a good deal of self-pity, but Willy Loman's quest for success in American terms and the details of his failure were honestly enough wrought so that the work's excesses could be forgiven. Alas, that was the final bit of restraint Miller showed as a dramatist. Since then, he has been intent on coercing our concern with moral parables (*The Crucible*), forcing us to accept rough melodramatics in a tragic framework (*View From the Bridge*), insisting that we do not miss the human ambiguities in history (*Incident at Vichy*), and offering us a dramatized autobiography (*After the Fall*) that has tottered between embarrassingly personal tidbits and inflated generalizations.

Whatever signs of life these plays possessed were entombed in philosophizing, smothered by facile psy-

* COMMENTARY, April 1968.

chological insights, and obfuscated by cloudbursts of woolly speeches that floated about in the theater evoking nothing more concrete than their own sonority. Whatever else Miller wanted to be taken for, he insisted that one should never think him anything but serious. And if it proved too difficult to attain this consideration through a personal and original art, there were always weighty decorations that could be used to keep up pretenses. A little speech here about guilt, a choral aside about destiny, a spurious historical analogy, a gratuitous introduction of the recently momentous—all these tricks that made him the darling of social realism abroad also kept up his reputation among those critics in America who thirst after significance so long as it is not given them in too precise and complex a manner.

One must suppose Miller secure in his seriousness, for he has now, in *The Creation of the World and Other Business*, not only seized upon a theme that no one could consider trivial, but has dared to treat it with fits of paradoxical humor. Last year we had Jesus Christ as a superstar, this year we have Man as a *shmuck*—the word is not mine, it is the epithet used by God immediately after Adam's fall. The creation, temptation, fall, and banishment of man from grace, Miller sees as a sort of domestic comedy in which God, as head of the household, presides over a simple-minded family easily led astray by Lucifer, the bad boy on the block. It would be uncharitable to deal with the play's theology: on the question of divine omnipotence and human free will, for example, Miller's God blusters somewhere toward the end of the third act that He wants men to be free to choose; Lucifer says something about the Almighty's being in need of evil in the world in order that man might need his forgiveness, and that is about the sum of the playwright's interpretation of the problem.

But let us get back to God's little household. Everything begins well enough. God, anticipating Michelangelo's version of the event, wakes Adam with a touch of the finger, and they fall to naming things.

("Labbit," says Adam. God looks doubtful. "Rabbit," Adam amends. God agrees.) God is pleased with His work and Adam is a contented extension of God's will except for one detail. When pressed, the obedient son admits to wondering why all the creatures except him have a companion. Miller's God, who improvises at creation, admits His oversight and brings forth Eve in the traditional manner. Except for a tendency to answer God's explanations and interdictions with a dazed "Why?," there is nothing about her to suggest that she will prove susceptible to temptation. Both she and Adam seem embarked on nothing more harmful than a pre-pubescent date.

However, back in heaven, surrounded by Raphael, Chemuel, and Azrael, a trio of imbecile angels who bore Him with perpetual hosannas, God begins to fret. Unlike the animals around who share their garden, His pet creatures are not multiplying. Their innocence keeps them from being fruitful. That He might have provided them with an instinct similar to the one which keeps the rest of the animal world humming, doesn't occur to God. In His quandary, He calls on Lucifer for advice. Lucifer has an easy solution—a little sex education. "Look," says the angel who will soon rule in hell, "he's sticking it in her ear now. He's got to learn where to put it."

Thus is introduced one of the grand themes of Western theology—the knowledge that will bring death to mankind. "All they do is screw all the time," says Azrael, the Angel of Death, with distaste. "How can they keep thinking up these positions?" muses God as Adam and Eve, now expelled from Eden, make up for time lost through innocence.

By now Miller's notion of humor should be apparent. It is simply to juxtapose a "realistic" notion of behavior with the Bible's grand but schematic conception of the beginning of man's existence and woes. In itself, not a bad idea; but what a delicate mastery of divine and human comedy it would take to make it a successful one. Simply following a biblical quotation with some down-to-earth prose is not enough. Neither are a few bur-

lesque anachronisms, such as having a still innocent Adam walk on stage, stare at Eve's upturned rump, and ask, "How about some volleyball?" I would never presume to suggest how such an enterprise in comedy could be carried off, but I am certain it would have to be done by someone who was in no way fettered by belief in, or nostalgia for, the tale he was elaborating upon. Only a true infidel, amazed that such a mass of contradictions and inconsistencies could enthrall the imagination of an entire culture, could make us laugh at the very essence of our theological bafflement instead of at the coy problems it presents for a modern narrator with a mundane wit.

Now Miller is certainly no infidel. Having struggled so long to find a subject that would easily contain his thoughts about suffering, guilt, and other human flaws, he has no intention of settling for a drama filled with light conceits. Once out of Eden, the jokes become fewer and fewer, and the serious battle between Lucifer and God for sovereignty over man goes on until the death of Abel. Lucifer, as conceived by Miller, is a petulant sophist, pleased whenever he can turn a paradox to his own ends. Like so many other literary devils, he affects a more logical and compassionate approach to man than that which God has ordained. However, unlike his more successful literary forerunners, the Lucifer of *The Creation of the World and Other Business* has no power to his being—no evil grandeur, no fresh temptation makes him compelling. He is little more than a whining *raisonneur* in Miller's conception, a product of a liberal imagination that cannot believe in evil, only in its sentimental consequences. Thus this Lucifer is neither a fierce rebel nor a seductive intelligence: he is merely a poor theologian.

Against this personification of denial, played by George Grizzard with a certain self-satisfied impishness and a near-perpetual sardonic smile, we have a God who, as I mentioned earlier, can give no better defense of His actions than that He wanted man to have a free choice in the destiny of the world. Apart from this and some scenes of

comic exasperation with the lower order of beings He has created, angels included. He bumbles about the stage in unmemorable fits of divine anxiety. He ends by being the kind of enlightened parent who, having refused to dictate what is right or wrong to his children, nevertheless punishes them when, to His mind, they go astray.

All this comes to a tepid conclusion when Cain, described by Lucifer as a religious fanatic, slays his brother. Then the world's first murderer, indifferent to God's entreaties, refuses to feel remorse and even vaguely accuses Him, through His omnipotency, of being an accomplice. God is shocked. The devil senses victory. But wait. This is, after all, a modern interpretation. A devil's triumph lacks sophistication and ambiguity, so we must have Cain renounce both God's comfort and the devil's aid, and go off to become, with a certain doomed pride, his species' mottled future.

It is hard, even in a schematic retelling of the play, to be as simple-minded as its author. It is also hard to believe that such unoriginal insights into the relationship between man and his divinity could cause such a feeling of outrage. Of course, Miller has added some new vulgarity to the story of creation, but that alone should not be enough to prompt one to excoriate a play that has already come to a brief and timely end. The fact is that the faults in *The Creation of the World and Other Business* allow one to see more clearly the lapses of so many of the author's earlier works that escaped without proper censure. It is easier, after experiencing the excesses of this last play, to understand how, as an artist, Miller has so often cheapened life in the past through his readiness to understand it too quickly and to festoon it with gaudy pronouncements. And it is this that refuels critical anger. Not the violation of some precious aesthetic principle, but the insult, however unwitting, to human existence itself. When this is understood, then silence and fashionable indifference become sins that are in every way far worse than those committed by Arthur Miller's befuddled Adam.

Man Is Not Alone & God in Search of Man

Contemporary Jewish
Masterpieces by the late
Abraham Joshua Heschel
One of the
Leading Jewish
Scholars of Our Age



The recent untimely death of Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel has left the Jewish world bereft of one of its most eloquent spokesmen, a unique religious leader capable of making the message of Judaism heard on the innumerable problems of our times. Professor Heschel was the author of, among other works, *Man's Quest for God*, *The Sabbath*, and *The Earth Is the Lord's*, as well as his two-part masterpiece, *Man Is Not Alone* and *God in Search of Man*—now reissued in a special edition.

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Books in Review

The Limits of Schooling

INEQUALITY: A REASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF FAMILY AND SCHOOLING IN AMERICA. By CHRISTOPHER JENCKS, with MARSHALL SMITH, HENRY ACLAND, MARY JO BANE, DAVID COHEN, HERBERT GINTIS, BARBARA HEYNS, STEPHAN MICHELSON. *Basic Books*. 399 pp. \$12.50.

Reviewed by DIANE RAVITCH

CHRISTOPHER JENCKS's *Inequality* is a good case study of what happens when a serious and complex piece of research is promoted like the *Love Story* of social science. After a pre-publication press conference, after numerous newspaper accounts and editorials, after all the reviews and excerpts from the book had appeared, everyone who cared seemed to have a firm opinion of whether Jencks was right or wrong without having read the book itself. Consequently, there are two versions of Jencks to consider: Pop-Jencks and Jencks *vero*. In the distorted interpretation that is Pop-Jencks, Jencks is believed to have "proved" that schools do not make a difference, that they have no impact on the outcome of children's lives. Many people who will not have the patience to wade through the book believe that it shows that putting additional resources into schools is a waste of money and that educational reform is a waste of time. The laissez-faire implications of this interpretation can be expected to influence legislators, policymakers, and voters, many of whom will be relieved to find "scientific" justification for reducing education budgets.

DIANE RAVITCH has written widely on issues of public education. Her book on the New York City school system will be published later this year by Basic Books.

It is ironic that a book which advocates radical egalitarianism should lend itself to the use of those who oppose any immediate or long-range relief of inequality. For Jencks does not "prove" that schools do not make a difference, nor does he disparage educational reform. He describes the *limits* of schooling, which were forgotten by zealous school reformers in the last decade. What Jencks attempts to demonstrate is that equality of opportunity will not produce equality of condition—i.e., income—among adults, because the schools are not able to overcome genetic and environmental inequalities among children. This does not mean that schools have no effect on individual destinies or on society generally. It does mean, in Jencks's view, that school reform is not the best way to eliminate poverty; the best way to do that is to raise the income of poor people.

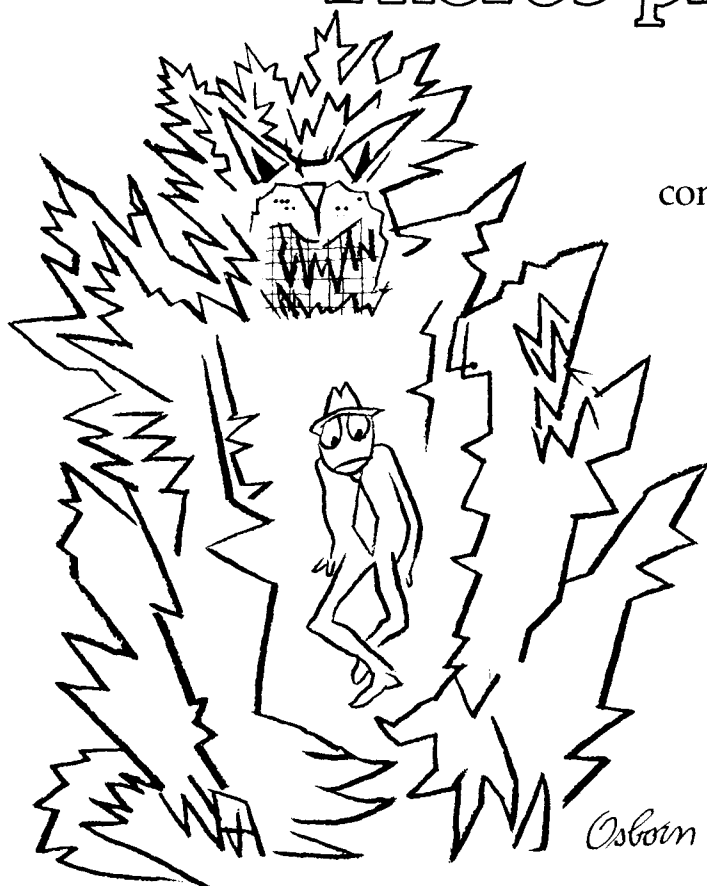
Inequality is not really a book about education, it is a book about Christopher Jencks's social philosophy. He is an egalitarian who believes that while men may never be made equal in their genetic endowment and in their life circumstances, society does have the means to equalize rewards. Jencks is not interested in equal opportunity but in equal results. Equal opportunity presumes a competition in which all runners start at the same point and have an equal chance to win. But, writes Jencks, "since a competitive system means that some people 'succeed' while others 'fail,' it also means that people will end up unequal." Thus, men with identical IQ's, identical family background, and identical levels of education will not necessarily have the same income; one might be a salesman, while another is a football star. Jencks would like to see a society in which everyone ends up with approximately the same rewards, no winners or losers.

The key assumption of his study is that there *should* be approximate equality of income throughout society. He recognizes that most Americans do not share his egalitarianism: "They have no commitment to ensuring that everyone's job is equally desirable, that everyone exercise the same amount of political power, or that everyone receives the same income." But Jencks does have that commitment, and it is the standard against which he judges the effects of schooling and family background.

In Jencks's view, the fact that men with the same cognitive skills, family background, and educational attainment end up with differing incomes shows that economic success is not caused by any of these factors. Since none of the easily measured variables determines income, he attributes the variation in men's incomes to skills which are incidental ("the ability to hit a ball thrown at high speed, the ability to persuade a customer that he wants a larger car than he thought he wanted, the ability to look a man in the eye without seeming to stare. . .") and to luck ("chance acquaintances who steer you to one line of work rather than another, the range of jobs that happen to be available in a particular community when you are job hunting, the amount of overtime work in your particular plant . . ."). He does not show much interest in such noncognitive traits as character, ambition, and motivation, which have a lot to do with whether people are able to transform "luck" into success. (Because Jencks and his team worked only with existing data, doing no original research, they were limited to the variables that other researchers were interested in.)

Jencks believes that since success is determined by chance, there is no rational justification for the grossly unequal spread of eco-

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conomic rewards that now obtains. Of course, Jencks would also argue that even if success went *only* to the able this too would constitute an argument for equalizing income, since laggards would never have a chance to succeed. The point that Jencks wants to make is that the major institution which Americans have relied on to produce equality, the schools, do not have that effect.

The curious aspect of Jencks's book is that if read closely it seems to prove that success is *not* entirely random, and that schooling is not irrelevant to success. Jencks shows that educational attainment (the number of years of schooling) is the prime determinant of occupational status; without enough years of education, access to high-status occupations is closed. Not surprisingly, Jencks finds a correlation between children's economic origins and their educational aspirations and attainment. Upper-middle-class families know that education will help their children succeed; Jencks points out that about twice as much is spent on the education of rich children as on that of poor children. He estimates that "upper-middle-class sons can expect to make about 75 per cent more money than lower-class sons." About 40-50 per cent of this difference in income is attributed by Jencks to the upper-middle class's educational advantages, which shows that "the theory that the upper-middle class maintains its privileged economic position by ensuring that its children get more education than other people is closer to the mark than the theory that the upper-middle class is biologically superior. . . ." Still, despite the considerable advantages of the upper-middle class, Jencks does not believe that there is "any mechanism available to most upper-middle-class parents for maintaining their children's privileged economic position." Fewer than half of those born into the most affluent fifth of the population, he estimates, will be part of this elite segment when they grow up. While social class is important, there is still significant mobility.

Schooling, then, does make an important difference in children's lives. To those radicals who advo-

cate shutting down all schools and allowing children to learn "on the streets," Jencks issues a rebuke: ". . . white middle-class children might still learn much of what they now learn. . . . Some of them read a great deal at home, developing their skills without any help from school. But most poor black children would probably not learn to read without schools. The cognitive gap between rich and poor and between black and white would thus be far greater than it is now. Those who propose to abolish schools ought to ponder this possibility."

Even white middle-class children benefit from exposure to school, Jencks concedes grudgingly: "Despite our reservations, we tentatively conclude that if students leave school early in adolescence, their verbal and numerical skills do not develop as much as if they remain in school. . . . We also infer that equalizing the amount of schooling people get might do quite a lot to equalize cognitive skills. This reflects the fact that although each extra year of schooling has only a modest effect on test scores, the benefits are now largely concentrated on those who are already advantaged. If everyone received the same schooling, the 'double advantage' phenomenon in this area could be eliminated."

WHAT emerges from Jencks's study is a picture of the school as an institution which tries to reward intelligence and industry, but not dullness and laziness. This way of operating may encourage excellence and leadership, but it does not produce equality of results. Thus, Jencks would disagree with those social critics of American education who have argued that the "system," with its reliance on test scores and credentials, is weighted against the poor and serves as a hindrance to social mobility. Jencks believes that "maximizing social mobility is the wrong objective. We would like to see a society in which everyone could enter the occupation of his choice and perform competently in it. America is not such a society today. But if it were, there is no reason to suppose that the rate of so-

cial mobility would be higher than it is now. . . . We can see no great virtue in such a policy. We do not want to randomize inequality; we want to reduce it."

So, says Jencks, the trouble with equal opportunity is that people are not equal. Social science has not discovered ways to make those who are dumb, lazy, and unambitious win equal rewards in a fair competition with people who are smart, ambitious, and talented. Jencks's egalitarianism, therefore, cannot be achieved without resort to governmental compulsion.

Since genetic and environmental disadvantage cause so much inequality, one strategy to lessen inequality might be "to allocate the most favorable environments to those individuals who start life with the fewest genetic advantages. By implication, of course, it also means allocating the least favorable environments to those who start with genetic advantages." Of course, Jencks predicts that this policy would imply not only remedial reading for slow students, but that "anyone who was reading above the norm for his age should be sent home, and the entire resources of the schools devoted to the laggards."

The society that wanted to eliminate cognitive inequality totally might be required not only to exclude the genetically advantaged from school, but to deny them access to books and television. Jencks recognizes that the "social cost" of such a policy might be "intolerable," but he is more concerned with the difficulties in implementing the strategy than with its ultimate desirability or its effect on civil liberties.

Another extension of egalitarianism into social policy would be a reordering of the financing of higher education. As Jencks sees it, some people get more than their "share" of higher education (each person's share is the national median for number of years in school). This means that society as a whole is unfairly underwriting the education of people who will have a significantly improved chance of entering a high-status occupation. The way to redress this unequal consumption of education would be to impose an

income-tax surcharge on those who receive more than their share of education; conversely, those who drop out before receiving their share would be reimbursed with "subsidized job training, subsidized housing, or perhaps only a lower tax rate." Such a policy would in fact create an incentive to drop out before graduating from high school, but maybe the logic behind it is that anyone dumb enough to fall for it isn't college material anyway. Policies like this one reinforce the suspicion that an element of unconscious elitism lurks in the dim recesses of egalitarianism.

Jencks also would like the government to see that all jobs are equally desirable. This would mean governmental regulation of wages and working conditions, and some sort of national, or even international, machinery to prevent unusually valuable workers from finding a way "to gain special privileges." To insure job equality within each organization, the government might require rotation among the competent and the less competent. The egalitarian society which Jencks projects would have minimum and maximum wage scales "for all sorts of jobs," like a national civil-service system.

THE greatest weakness of *Inequality* lies in the superficial treatment it accords to its major proposal, income equality. Though Jencks devotes many pages to showing the ramifications of education, family background, and cognitive skills, he does not devote much attention to the social and political consequences of the income equality he advocates. What, for instance, would be the impact of income equalization on economic growth and productivity? Two sentences, about the Israeli kibbutz and Japan, dismiss the subject out-of-hand. What has been the fate of income equalization in Communist countries where it has been doctrine? Not a word. Have there been studies comparing efficiency within the private sector to that within the public sector? Evidently not.

Sometimes income differentials are justified and useful. Daniel Bell wrote recently in the *Public Inter-*



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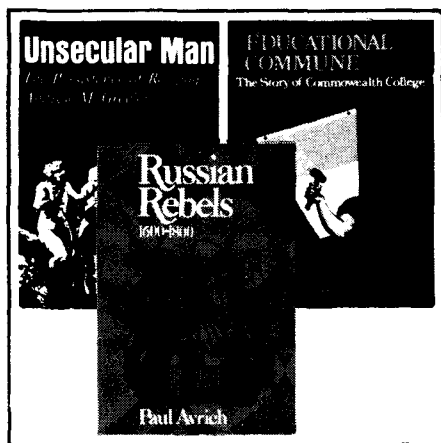
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est that "there may be good market reasons for insisting that the wages of a physician and dentist be greater than those of a nurse or dental technician, for if each cost the patient roughly the same (if one could for the same price have the services of a better qualified person), no one would want to use a nurse or dental technician, even in small matters. The price system, in this case, is a mechanism for the efficient rationing of time." Jencks brushes off this objection by suggesting that the hiring of a secretary to save a \$300,000-a-year executive one hour per week might be considered efficient rationing in the present scheme of things. Writes Jencks to his own loaded example: "... it is not always obvious that such 'inefficiencies' are real. Nor is it clear that they should be encouraged, even if they are real."

Common sense alone should have told us that equal education does not produce equal income. Most Americans know, but don't care, that brothers do not have equal incomes or that singing stars earn more than college presidents. Nor is it necessarily unfair that a high-school graduate should earn \$18,000 a year as a construction worker while a Ph.D. earns substantially less as a teacher. Yet, on the other hand, most Americans like to think of America as a classless society, a place where their child might become a famous athlete or the president of General Motors. Out of this desire for classlessness has come political support for efforts to eliminate poverty and to raise the general level of social welfare. Social progress has occurred through ingenious appeals to the self-interest of various groups. But Christopher Jencks is not interested in the orchestration of self-interest. Instead, he wants a new world, a world where people "feel ashamed" of selfishness or of using competitive advantage for personal gain. What he seems finally to want is not just income redistribution, which might ultimately have political support in this country, but a reordering of human nature through the persistent intervention of government.

Jencks has twisted the American ideal of political equality—every

citizen equal before the law—into a radical egalitarianism which abrogates respect for individualism. The problem is not Jencks's desire to narrow the gap between rich and poor, but a philosophy of equal results which requires not only efforts to upgrade those who are unequal below the median, but also active steps to level down those who are unequal above the median. In a society built to correspond to this philosophy, anyone who displayed talent or brilliance would be sent to the end of the line, penalized for overachieving. In contrast to equality of opportunity, which encourages competition to excel, equality of results ends the competition, penalizes excellence, and guarantees mediocrity. As one begins to ponder the absurdities implicit in medianocracy, equality of results appears to be at least as irrational as the inequality it is intended to replace.

Catholic Chic

BARE RUINED CHOIRS. By GARRY WILLS. Doubleday. 272 pp. \$7.95.

Reviewed by ANDREW M. GREELEY

Bare Ruined Choirs is a collection of articles by an "involved" journalist reporting on the last ten years of the history of American Catholicism. It is a story that has been told many times before: sweet memories of a Catholic boyhood with its certainties, its quotes from Chesterton, and its romantic medievalism; then the promise of Catholic liberalism in the 50's with its social encyclicals, its liturgical changes, its Thomistic philosophical revival (Gilson and Maritain), its "Catholic Action" movements; then the intense excitement of the two Johns—the Pope and the President—and the

ANDREW M. GREELEY, director of the Center for the Study of American Pluralism at the University of Chicago, is the author of, among other books, *That Most Distressful Nation: The Taming of the American Irish* and *Unsecular Man*. He is also a Catholic priest.

dazzling array of "new" Catholics who were discovered in the 60's—Teilhard de Chardin, John Courtney Murray, and (somewhat improbably) Jacqueline Grennan; and finally the tremendous let-downs of Vietnam and Pope Paul and the rekindling of faith and hope in the radical religious protest of the brothers Berrigan.

Toward the first two periods of his Catholic life Mr. Wills feels only nostalgia and toward the third, only bitterness. And savage bitterness it is. Everyone connected with the Catholic 60's is demolished cleverly, cruelly, and unfairly, their words torn out of the context of their own intellectual ambience and made to look foolish, their deeds made to look short-sighted in the light of unanticipated and unintended consequences represented in retrospect as inevitable effects.

It is, for example, easy to find in the policies of John Kennedy the seeds of the 1965 escalation in Vietnam and resulting disasters. But it does not follow, save in the simple, moralistic world of people like Mr. Wills, that John Kennedy "caused" the escalation. One could also find in the Kennedy perspective seeds of the opposite policy and could argue plausibly that such a shrewd and suspicious Irish politician would have vetoed the escalation. In point of fact, Kennedy neither escalated the war in 1965 nor vetoed further escalation, because he was dead. All else is speculation—and frequently vicious speculation.

It is also true that in Pope John's vision of the papacy there was the possibility of the tragic mistakes Paul VI has made. There was also the possibility of all sorts of alternative developments. To see the Pauline response as an inevitable consequence of the Johannine papacy is to engage in a kind of historical determinism to which Mr. Wills (who is, after all, a classical scholar by training) should be superior.

Nor do we know how John Courtney Murray would have developed his theories on the relationship between the Catholic Church and the United States if he had lived. But to see him as a theologian of the cold war is a

gross caricature. Moreover, to denigrate his work because certain young Jesuits feel he was irrelevant during his last years is to substitute youth worship for serious analysis. Which is exactly what Mr. Wills does here and also what he does in his cruel annihilation of Mrs. Jacqueline Grennan Wexler (now that, as president of Hunter College, she is no longer a hero to the students).

MR. WILLS, of course, does not pretend to be fair or balanced. He is telling us how he himself feels. But he also wants to persuade us that his own feelings about Catholicism in the 60's are a description of the underlying spiritual reality of the time. The way he feels is also the way things really are. Nevertheless, little of what he describes has anything to do with the Catholic masses, about whom he knows nothing and cares less.

Most of the Catholic population was affected only slightly by the Council and its reforms. All ev-

idence is that Catholics like the English liturgy, ecumenism, and the retreat from strict canonical morality. They do not take to the self-pity of some former priests, "swinging" nuns, and draft-board-raiding radicals. Whatever the faults of the Catholic tradition, it has usually managed to remain relatively immune to self-righteous moralism no matter where it comes from. Nor do most Catholics like the birth-control encyclical. But having made up their minds about birth control long before Paul VI did, they do not take the encyclical any more seriously than they do Mr. Wills's friends, the brothers Berrigan.

Catholics are more likely to practice birth control than they used to and somewhat less likely to go to church, particularly if they are young. But they are also more inclined to wonder explicitly about fundamental religious issues. Unfortunately, many of the clergy are busy trying to ape the style if not the deeds of the radicals whom Mr. Wills admires;

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hence they have not found the time to address themselves to basic questions of meaning and to reinterpret the Catholic symbol system in terms that have pertinence for contemporary problems of faith and hope.

In the meantime the Catholic population has arrived definitively in the ranks of the middle class (despite the myth about the blue-collar ethnic), has moved decisively to the Left politically (despite the myth of the Catholic backlash), has been more likely to oppose the war in Vietnam than has the general population (despite the myth of the Catholic super-patriot), and has elbowed its way into the upper reaches of the university world (despite the myth of Catholic anti-intellectualism).

These are immense social changes of great importance not only to American Catholics but to the rest of the nation. Yet instead of trying to interpret these changes either for Catholics or for the rest of the country, Catholic intellectuals like Mr. Wills are interested only in talking about themselves and their little coterie of friends on the evident assumption that their own religious doubts and attitudes are somehow closer to the truth about Catholicism in the 60's than what has been happening to fifty-million American Catholics. In this view, Jesuits from Woodstock who are working on stage design are more important than the priests and nuns who are staffing the only available alternative school system in the inner cities of the country, and protesters in front of the Harrisburg federal courthouse are of greater interest than graduate students trying to articulate the Polish-American experience for the first time to an academic world that is not quite sure that Poles are capable of experience. It used to be that only bishops counted, now only intellectuals count.

The American-Catholic community, then, has finally succeeded in producing an intelligentsia so taken with itself that it either does not know anything about the Catholic community as a whole or simply thinks that the masses are too dull to bother with. In this,

as in so many other respects, Catholics are becoming just like everyone else. Yet there is still one big difference, which is that, as usual, Catholics have made it into an avant-garde position just when that position is being deserted by everyone else. For here is Mr. Wills elevating the feelings and the problems of the intellectual elite to representative status just at the moment when the non-Catholic intellectual elites—in the wake of the McGovern disaster—are beginning to wonder whether they should really be paying more attention to the rest of America. Still, Catholics are getting more agile. We catch up more quickly than we used to. In two or three years Mr. Wills and some of his friends will doubtless be celebrating the glories of Polish-American culture.

Secularism Denied

TRADITION AND REALITY: THE IMPACT OF HISTORY ON MODERN JEWISH THOUGHT. By NATHAN ROTENSTREICH. *Random House*. 145 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by MARVIN FOX

THE conviction that the Jews possess a fixed and unchanging tradition is woven into the very fabric of classical Judaism. The Mishnah teaches that Moses received the Torah at Sinai and handed it over to Joshua, who in turn handed it over to the "elders" who in turn transmitted it to the generations. The Torah which Moses received was, moreover, according to established doctrine, not only the Pentateuch, but the whole of the Oral Law. Indeed, classical Judaism holds that *all* sound Jewish teaching was included in the original revelation. As a familiar midrash puts it, "Scripture, Mishnah, Talmud, Tosefta, Aggadah, and even everything that an assiduous student will say at any time in the future in the presence of his

teacher—all of this was already spoken to Moses at Sinai."

Over the centuries, the elevation of all Jewish lore to the status of original revelation has had two consequences. On the one hand, it has had a liberating effect. Since the original revealed text is seen as open and malleable, both doctrine and practice can be correspondingly flexible rather than dogmatically rigid. This is why Judaism has been able over the centuries to accommodate such an astonishing variety of theological doctrines, while generating so remarkably few heretics and heresies. It is also why the law could function for so long and in so many places and circumstances as a living instrument for the ordering of individual and communal Jewish life. Yet, at the same time, the attachment to tradition imposed certain limits. Doctrine was open, but not infinitely so. Law was flexible, but within fixed boundaries.

So long as Jews lived in isolation from the main currents of modern thought, their attachment to Jewish tradition remained safe and unchallenged. But when this isolation came to its inevitable end, and the twin forces of modern secularism and historicism began to affect Jewish thinking, the stable world of tradition was soon shaken from its moorings. A secular orientation undermined the validity even of the original revelation, to say nothing of its devastating effects on the claim that all of later Jewish doctrine and practice had also been revealed at Sinai. Modern methods of textual study contributed further to this collapse by robbing the written word of its authority. Finally, the more the Jews concerned themselves with history, and especially the more they began to search out and reconstruct their own history, the less were they able to accept and submit to the demands of tradition. The attempt to understand the Jewish tradition from a historical perspective soon turned out to contain a major threat to the survival of that tradition.

Is this development as irreversible as it has seemed over the past hundred and fifty years, or is there

MARVIN FOX teaches philosophy at Ohio State University and is head of the Jewish Studies program there.

a possibility that modernism and the Jewish tradition can be reconciled? To lay the groundwork for his own answer to the question—by far the more rewarding part of the present book—Professor Rotenstreich first offers a compact but subtle analysis of how six of the main figures of Jewish thought and scholarship in the modern period dealt with the problem: Leopold Zunz, Nachman Krochmal, Heinrich Graetz, Simon Dubnow, Ahad Ha'am, and Chaim Nachman Bialik. What all these thinkers had in common, notwithstanding the diversity of their views, was the conviction that the tradition could no longer be seen as binding to the modern Jew in the way it had been for his forebears.

Leopold Zunz was perhaps the most outspoken proponent of this view. As the father of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, with its rigorously scientific orientation to the Jewish past, he based his work "on the assumption that the severance of all connections with the world of tradition was an accomplished, incontrovertible fact." Krochmal was not so dogmatic as Zunz. A historian in the speculative, metaphysical mode, he acknowledged the presence of certain eternal features in Judaism, and it was his hope that these metaphysical elements, or essences, might come to be seen as the unshakable foundations of Jewish faith. Yet for Krochmal, as for Zunz, all the rest was simply the result of historically conditioned circumstances, and therefore transitory.

Heinrich Graetz, the third scholar with whom Rotenstreich deals, went to the opposite extreme, denying the very possibility of a distinction between Judaism and history. For Graetz, as Rotenstreich expresses it, "Judaism as history and Judaism as religion coincide . . . since Jewish history is a manifestation of the substance of Jewish religion." Differing radically though he did from Krochmal in his rigid rejection of all mystical, non-rationalist elements, Graetz was, however, no less obsessed with history. Indeed, the concern with history dominated the work of all three of these thinkers to such an extent that

they seemed far more interested in developing a "scientific" understanding of Judaism than in salvaging the Jewish tradition as a viable way of life.

Dubnow, Ahad Ha'am, and Bialik, the three remaining figures discussed by Rotenstreich, were, on the other hand, above all Jewish survivalists, intensely concerned if not with the survival of Judaism itself, then at least with the survival of the Jewish people. Convinced that the Jewish religious tradition was at an end, they proposed to replace it with an overriding concern for Jewish culture and Jewish national existence. Thus, Dubnow's proposals for social and cultural—though not political or territorial—autonomy, Ahad Ha'am's vision of Palestine as a Jewish spiritual center, and Bialik's conviction that the Hebrew language was of preeminent importance for Jewish survival. All three responded in their separate ways to a common perception of historical reality: since religion was dead, and Jewish tradition was no longer a present reality, the choice lay between accepting with equanimity the end of Jewish existence, or taking up the search for new and viable ways to restore the Jewish people to a meaningful national life.

HAVING given over the larger part of his book to explicating the major theoretical positions of Jewish modernist thinking, Rotenstreich in the concluding section devotes his best energies to refuting them. To begin with, he calls for a recognition that we have come to the end of an era. No longer, in his view, can we find adequate guidance in the doctrines and policies of those Jewish thinkers who, in response to what they saw as the imperatives of the modern age, cut themselves off from the tradition. Their theories were, to be sure, frequently of a very high intellectual order. But in the very teeth of their theoretical brilliance, Jewish experience itself, time and again in the course of the past century, refuted their view that the tradition was dead. "Confronted with the possibility of striking roots in non-Jewish cultures and enjoying their ad-

vantage," he writes, "Jews always remained concerned with preserving their identity as Jews in terms of a tradition which linked them together." Even when the tradition was argued away, it somehow stubbornly went on existing.

In Rotenstreich's view, this tradition has always been more than a matter of historical memory, or common culture, or shared folkways, or any of the other constructs which the secular thinkers of the late 19th- and early 20th centuries invoked in their attempts to account for Jewish cohesiveness without acknowledging the centrality of religious belief. Indeed, such tenuous concepts are precisely what, in Rotenstreich's view, made their stratagems for Jewish survival futile and empty. For Rotenstreich, by contrast, there exists now only one true grounding for that return to the tradition which he considers mandatory if the Jews are to survive: the imperative of divine commandment. The tradition which Rotenstreich affirms here is, in other words, a faithful version of the same body of shared religious belief and practice which for many centuries constituted the vital core of Jewish existence.

ROTENSTREICH does not ask that we commit ourselves to the tradition and its imperative merely out of piety toward our past, or concern for our future survival. Instead, he argues persuasively for the claim that Jewish tradition offers a serious and tenable option to contemporary man in his present dilemma. As inhabitants of scientific-technological societies, we live today, according to Rotenstreich, in a world devoid of the richness of texture and the accompanying modes of symbolic expression which gave color and value to the life of past societies. More important, our world is also barren of moral guidelines. Rotenstreich recognizes that no contemporary man who respects reason can reject scientific thought, but he believes that it is possible, without any compromise of intellectual integrity, to accept and even contribute to the scientific enterprise while at the same time cherishing and nurturing the moral precepts, as well as the

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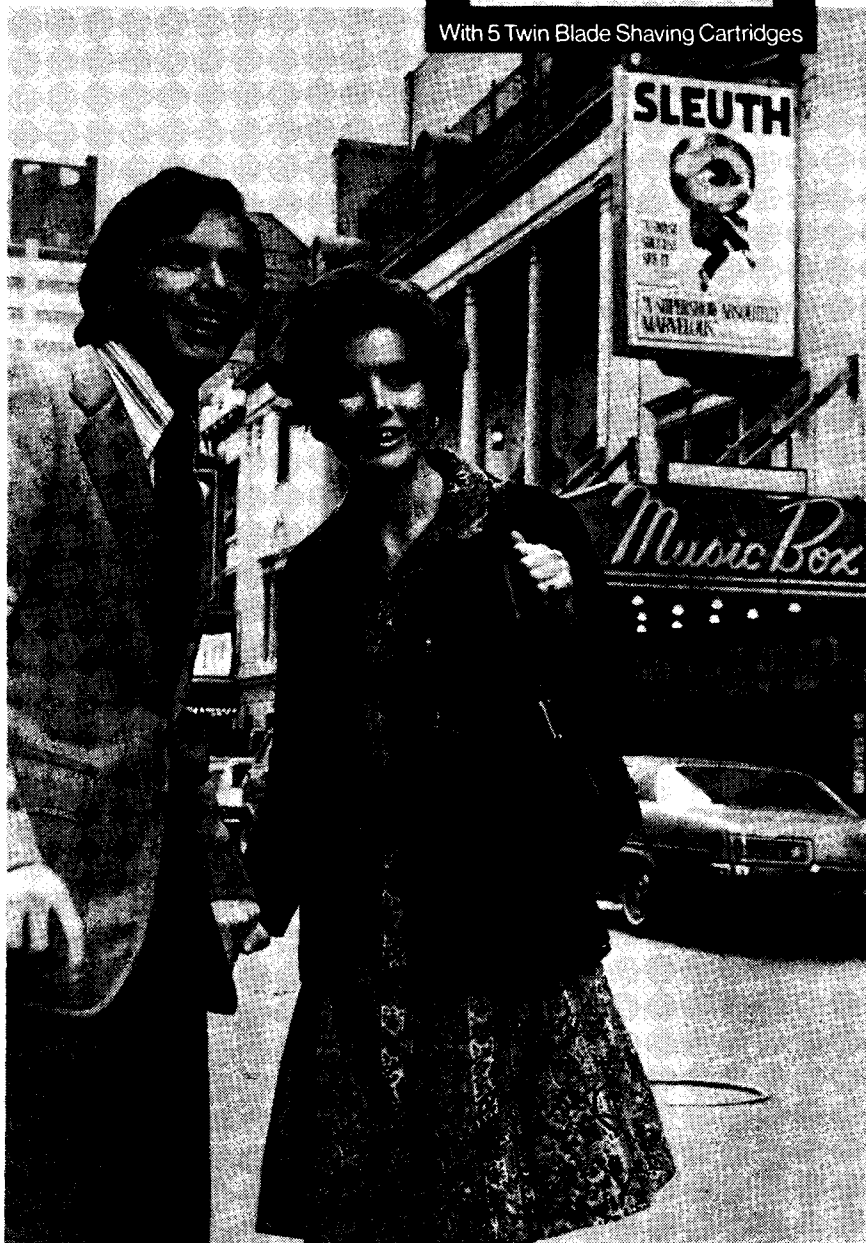
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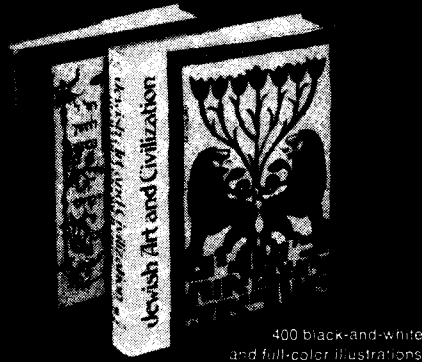


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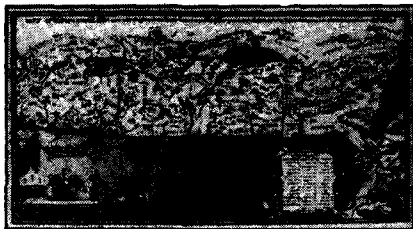
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special symbols and patterns, of the Jewish tradition.

In Rotenstreich's view, Jewish tradition, understood as a guide to conduct, rests above all on the Halachah, the code of Jewish law and practice which represents the only distinctively Jewish pattern of exercising human responsibility. He is fully aware of the difficulties this view poses, above all the problem of living today under a rigid code that in many of its details still reflects the social and technological realities of an earlier age. But he remains convinced that, "although such inner problems are of the greatest gravity, the Halachah, as a system of norms of human conduct in all areas, remains the key to the solution of the crisis of modern Judaism." He makes no plea for an unchanging law tied only to the past. Rather, he thinks the Halachah must be both traditional and open, for unless it is traditional, it will risk being arbitrary and unconnected with historical Jewish modes of response; and unless open, it will risk destroying individual human responsibility by becoming mechanized in its fixity. The ideal then is a Halachah which, though formed in its essentials by classical Jewish norms, yet leaves room for responsiveness both to changing times and to the diversity of individuals.

But how does one put together, in a single theoretical structure, a concept of law which is fixed, yet open; a law which makes man accountable above all to God, the ultimate judge, while demanding that he be free to "subscribe only to norms which are consistent with his highest ideals, his intelligence and knowledge"? A key to the answer may be suggested in the dedication of Rotenstreich's book, which reads: "For Gershom Scholem, Master and Source of Inspiration." Is Rotenstreich urging us to consider the way of Kabbalah as a proper implementation of tradition? As in the Mishnaic passage cited at the beginning, "tradition," *Masoret*, emphasizes the integrity of that which has been handed down; the stress is on what is given. But Kabbalah, as the term itself suggests, lays equal stress on the receiver—the man who responds in his particularity to the

tradition that is given him. If I have read Rotenstreich correctly, he is urging that contemporary Jewry devise the means to live within this dialectical tension. In the absence of tradition there is flux but no continuity, historical memory but no living Judaism. With a tradition so fixed that it relieves us of all individual responsibility, so rigid that it turns us into automata, there may be Judaism, but no Jews worthy of the name. With the perceptiveness of a distinguished philosopher, Rotenstreich has seen the problem, illuminated the issues, and opened the way for further fruitful reflection.

Troubled Scholar

THE FALL OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY. By ADAM ULAM. *The Library Press*. 217 pp. \$7.95.

Reviewed by DAVID THORBURN

ADAM ULAM is in pain, and he has written a cranky and opinionated book whose true purpose is to disclose the sources of his pain and its possible cure. He has not, however, acknowledged this purpose explicitly, imagining with some naiveté that he is conducting a dispassionate, if impressionistic, inquiry; and one consequence of his partial failure to acknowledge the personal, deeply subjective character of his enterprise is that the genuine virtues of his book are likely to be slighted or ignored entirely.

Ulam is offended to the point of injury by the self-indulgence and sheer simple irrationality that he believes have poisoned our public discourse concerning the largest purposes and values of society and, more particularly, concerning the direction and uses of the university. His impatience with nonsense, and especially with nonsense that is dangerous, sometimes leads to judgments whose wit and tough intelligence seem particularly bracing in these bad times:

DAVID THORBURN, a new contributor, teaches English at Yale. Mr. Thorburn is currently completing a critical study of Conrad.

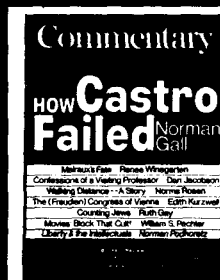
There are people who would claim that objective circumstances don't matter, that the psychological alienation of the American undergraduate is as much a justification for revolt as the very palpable lack of freedom of the student in Prague. But, if you believe that, you will believe anything, which has precisely been our problem in America.

The essence of *The Fall of the American University* is Ulam's faith in an idea of education at once narrower and more genuine than that which is dreamt of in currently fashionable philosophies. Because he fears the vagueness and moralism of their vocabulary and the assumptions which underlie it, Ulam is richly polemical in his antagonism to those spokesmen for educational reform who litanize so tediously about "authenticity," "relevance," "legitimacy," "restructuring." It is essential, he argues, not to "confuse things we should worry about with things we should study." To attribute to the university, or to impose upon it, an obligation to teach not particular subjects and intellectual skills, but how to live our lives or how to run society, is to deny the essential distinction between knowledge and wisdom; and also to be oblivious to the redeeming, civilizing importance of intellectual mastery and rational inquiry.

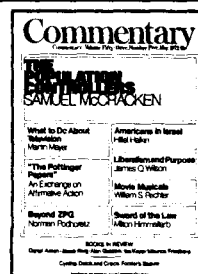
Professors teach mathematics, languages, sciences, literature: they are learned in particular disciplines and we should value them for what they know and can transmit to others. But they are not philosopher-kings, they possess no special wisdom that will dispense wholeness to their students or to society at large. To say this, Ulam would insist, is not to disparage universities, but to see what they really are, and why they are—or should be—precious to us. "A clandestine Polish university went on functioning in German-occupied Warsaw during World War II," Ulam writes, "even though its faculty and students risked a concentration camp or worse if their enterprise was discovered by the Gestapo. It was a real university because its members believed that despite (and because of) the hor-

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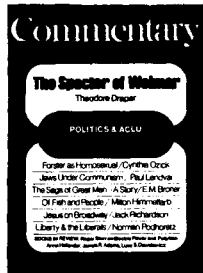
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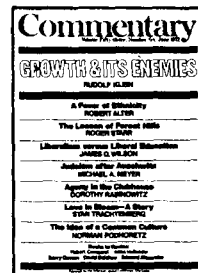
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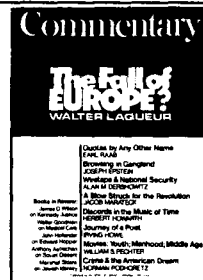
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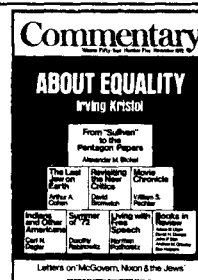
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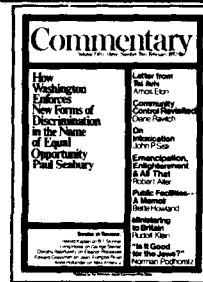
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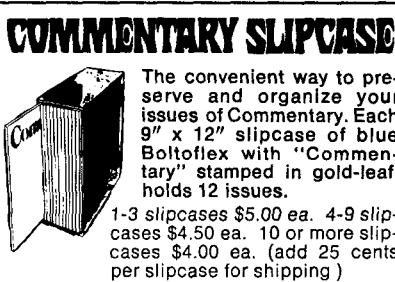
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rors which went on outside, it was important for them to teach and to learn."

BUT Ulam's impatience with nonsense and his sense of injury have negative results as well, causing him too often to simplify difficult problems and to lose all sense of proportion. Rightly contemptuous, for example, of those student and faculty activists whose "bizarre terminology" points up "how difficult and artificial it [is] to apply analogies from politics . . . to the university," Ulam fails to resist such analogies himself. His book is filled with tendentious comparisons between the atmosphere of our besieged universities in the late 1960's and various totalitarian regimes; and there is one strained moment when Ulam's passion so masters his common sense that he is driven to compare the Harvard administration's failure to punish a group of students who had contrived a discourteous "confrontation" for Secretary McNamara with Neville Chamberlain's capitulation to Hitler.

Such failures of proportion undercut many of Ulam's most important arguments, and will no doubt encourage those most in need of his saving sanity from seeing the truth of what he has been goaded into telling us. There is genuine force in his complaints about the unchecked expansion of an educational bureaucracy more concerned with social and administrative issues than with intellectual ones; and he is right, too, in his hostility toward current vulgar arguments for a politically and socially responsive university. But his assumption—implicit in his plea that the American university be "restored to its proper function"—that prior to these recent developments our universities were largely free of political and social commitments owes more to personal nostalgia than to historical accuracy. Though the radical critique of the university may be as dangerous as Ulam believes it to be, surely its defining error lies not in its claim that our universities have served established interests but in its conclusion that uni-

versities should now be compelled to serve new interests, this time (of course) the disestablished and the oppressed.

Ulam is undoubtedly right to see that the university's deepening involvement in policymaking during recent decades and its increasing dependence on government funding have helped to confer credibility on the bad idea that universities are, and ought to be, places of direct political power and sources of general wisdom concerning public policy, the state of the world, and of the psyche. But he fails to recognize that the "proper function" he wishes "restored"—that of academic teaching and research—has always been a partial and compromised ideal in American higher education. The reality he ignores is suggested with disturbing clarity in the response of a student of the 1870's who was asked by his history professor, the young Henry Adams, what he thought his education would be good for: "The degree of Harvard College is worth money to me in Chicago."

EVEN if explicitly ideological or political expectations for our educational institutions have wider currency today than earlier, it seems clear that American universities have always acknowledged, and have usually embraced with unselfconscious enthusiasm, a partly utilitarian conception of their function. The history of ROTC programs offers dramatic if partial evidence for the fact that the rationale for American universities has never been purely academic and intellectual. Throughout his book, Ulam talks as though the university's betrayal of the ideal of scholarship and teaching, its fall into a miasma of "relevance" and "concern" and social responsiveness, is a decisively new phenomenon. And although anti-intellectual pressures may be more intense and widespread now than at (some) earlier times, it seems misleading and finally unhelpful to yield to the temptation to see the present compromised circumstances of the universities as unique, with no equivalent in the long, muddled

history of higher education in America. Indeed, this impulse to claim the privilege of uniqueness, and especially to claim that one's miseries are unparalleled, is perhaps the chief habit and delusion of precisely those modishly guilt-ridden high priests of malaise, both within and without the university, against whom Ulam's arguments are directed.

In an objective sense, then, and in view of Ulam's explicit desire to explain the causes of our universities' problems, this is a flawed performance. Even as an account of the turbulence on our campuses in the past few years, the book is less than adequate, for despite scattered references to other schools, Ulam's real focus is Harvard, where he is a professor of government, and even in this case his chronicle is openly impressionistic and his attempts to generalize from his own limited involvement with troubles on his own campus are never entirely persuasive. Ulam insists that the apparent calm in the universities today is misleading, and claims he is as disturbed by current failures of direction as he was by the period of confrontations and student-strikes. But it is clear that his dark view of the present moment has been conditioned, perhaps excessively, by that earlier violent phase (his climactic chapters deal with the student bust at Harvard in 1969), just as it is clear that the trauma of that time is what drove him to write this strangely moving book.

THE true value of *The Fall of the American University* is to be found in Ulam's troubled scholar's reaction to the total, if momentary, breakdown of Harvard as a community of teachers and learners, and in his efforts to articulate a rationale for the existence of such communities. One wishes that Ulam had yielded more openly to his personal, even his autobiographical instincts, and that he had resisted the impulse to provide a superficially objective history of the postwar universities. As history, his work is imperfect; as personal testament, it remains powerful and important.

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In the Money

THE BIG FOUNDATIONS. By WALDEMAR A. NIELSEN. *Columbia University Press*. 475 pp. \$12.50.

Reviewed by SARA SANBORN

How other people spend their money is a perennial American preoccupation, and when the people in question are multimillionaires enjoying special tax breaks, monitoring their disbursements becomes a positive duty. Thus the last few years have produced a number of studies and investigations of private foundations, most of them critical or even muckraking. The trend has now arrived at its logical conclusion. Waldemar Nielsen, a former Ford Foundation officer, has produced a study of the giant foundations that is itself financed by a foundation.

The Twentieth Century Fund, whose mission is to support research on matters of contemporary concern, has gotten good value for its money. *The Big Foundations* is well-researched, informative, and judicious. It is also highly readable. I would expect that fund-raisers in their ceaseless search for inside information would rush to buy this book, but it should also make absorbing reading for anyone interested in American institutions, organizational behavior, or what the Establishment is up to. In its "Gallery of Portraits," the book offers individual studies of the thirty-three American foundations (out of some 25,000 registered ones) with assets of over \$100 million, their donors, programs, and business dealings. Here we find family feuds, financial scandals, and even a whiff of crime. We also get a good look at the values and social attitudes of the super-rich who left their money to benefit the rest of us. The activities that some tycoons have been able to regard as publicly useful add a rich scene to the human comedy.

As philanthropists, Nielsen

notes, "the Rockefellers are in a class by themselves, comparable on a historical scale with the Florentine Medicis." For four generations, the Rockefellers have made philanthropy a family calling, and the foundations bearing their name stand out for sustained productivity. Among the earliest activities of the Rockefeller Foundation were massive and successful campaigns against malaria, typhus, yellow fever, and hookworm all over the world. At the same time, the foundation contributed substantially to the establishment of permanent government machinery in public health, helped found the first schools of public health, and created a worldwide program of fellowships. It has also underwritten a whole array of scientific breakthroughs, including such research techniques as spectroscopy, chromatography, and the use of tracer elements; the development of the nuclear sciences (and weaponry); and the "green revolution." The importance of Rockefeller activities can be deduced from the fact that such government organizations as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health were set up on foundation models.

"The du Ponts, at the other extreme, range from niggling to deplorable." A large portion of du Pont charitable dollars go to keep up family houses, gardens, archives, and collections in Delaware as public exhibits. Unfortunately, since the "Historical Library" consists solely of company and family papers and most of the art collections are mediocre, the best that can be said for many of the family philanthropies is that "they make a contribution to the recreational life of one vicinity" by giving the proletariat a glimpse of aristocratic life-style. Less innocuous has been the largest single du Pont philanthropy, the Nemours Foundation chartered in Florida. Predictably, the main responsibility of the foundation is maintaining the palatial Nemours estate in Delaware as a perpetual memorial to the donor's forebears, with the leftover money going to a children's hospital. The foundation is fed by the Alfred I. du Pont Estate, whose activities have out-

raged public officials for three decades. For most of its life, the Estate has been nothing less than a huge holding company, its assets including virtual control of thirty Florida banks, two railroads, a paper company, and a telephone company. However, it was specifically exempted from the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 and from federal regulation by an amendment offered by then-Democratic Senator George S. Smathers of Florida. The "Empire," as the Estate is called in Florida, enjoyed its special privileges and extraordinary growth until 1971, when Congress finally caught up with it and forced enough divestiture to render it no longer a bank holding company under the law.

THE character of a foundation is powerfully affected by the character and vision of its donor, and few donors have had the social imagination of the Rockefellers. Nor have many had the sense to leave their foundations alone. Typically, donors dominate foundation programs, mandating conventional and parochial activities, as long as they live—and they tend to be a very long-lived group. The grandfather of them all is Charles Stewart Mott, who amassed his fortune in General Motors and who is still ruling his foundation at the age of ninety-seven. The foundation is dedicated to making Flint, Michigan a living embodiment of the donor's social ideals, which mainly revolve around adult education: in effect, the foundation runs a privately-financed Model Cities program. A donor's dead hand can also weigh heavily on the tiller. James B. Duke of North Carolina specified in his will precisely how his foundation was to spend his tobacco fortune until Kingdom Come. Each year, 32 per cent of income goes to Duke University, 5 per cent to Davidson College, and so on, with 6 per cent designated in perpetuity for building rural Methodist churches in North Carolina, presumably until the state is paved over with them.

After a donor's death, control typically passes to members of his family and/or his business associates. Leaving a large block of

SARA SANBORN, who reviewed *The Hidden Injuries of Class* by Richard Sennet and Jonathan Cobb in our December 1972 issue, recently spent two years doing research on foundations at Harvard.

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voting stock in a business to a foundation whose board is composed of the donor's heirs is a good way to assure family control of the corporation while avoiding taxes. Only nine of the big thirty-three foundations are free of significant donor-family or corporation ties. Nonetheless, most foundations have not engaged in the kind of blatant self-dealing that populists darkly suspect them of. Families have not made grants to their friends and relatives, or taken bread from the mouths of the poor to pay themselves fat trustees' salaries. Companies have not even tried to take public-relations advantage of foundations bearing their names. (Ford Motor Company officials have more often felt they suffered from the activities of the highly visible and often controversial Ford Foundation.) The worst result of foundation-corporation marriages has been indifferent investment performance by some foundations. Several studies have indicated that returns on foundation portfolios are lower than they would be if assets were diversified. Safety is also a factor, but it appears that concentration of foundation assets in donor companies means that millions of dollars are lost to charity every year. The usefulness of a number of foundations has also been impaired by the limited vision of Old-Home-Week boards. The family-run Pew Memorial Trust of Philadelphia, for example, is notorious for its support of right-wing and fundamentalist causes such as the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade.

DESPITE critics on both Right and Left, however, most foundations are respectably centrist institutions with benign if unexciting activities. Relatively few have well-defined, professionally-guided programs for social change. (Ford, Carnegie, Rockefeller and Rockefeller Brothers, Danforth, Kellogg, and Kettering stand out in their variously effective ways.) Most big foundations, like most medium-sized and small ones, function mainly as check-writers for a host of other non-profit agencies ranging from the United Negro College

Fund to the local symphony orchestra. Probably the most activist of them all is the \$3½ billion Ford Foundation, which drew a barrage of criticism for its backing of the ill-fated Ocean Hill-Brownsville school decentralization plan in New York and its small grant to the noisy Mexican-American Youth Organization of San Antonio. However, Nielsen reports, a careful study of even Ford's grants for 1969 reveals that only 8 per cent were related to controversial domestic issues and could be called activist or experimental. In 1968, 41 per cent of all American foundation grants, \$308 million, went to education, commonly in the form of endowment and building grants, while health and science got 24 per cent, \$183 million. The big foundations have more often been "on the trailing edge than the cutting edge of change."

Nonetheless, the author's conclusion that private philanthropy is "a sick, malfunctioning institution" seems unduly strong on his own showing. The big spenders have generally lacked initiative and imagination on social issues, and most have moved with timidity (if at all) into new areas like race relations. However, if there have been only a few dynamic leaders, there have also been few actual delinquents. The programs of most have been decent, if not daring. Nielsen concludes somewhat ambivalently that foundations have been "useful," but feels that they are now socially "unproductive." Honorable men may, of course, differ as to what constitutes productivity.

More experimentation and less avuncular check-writing, the author believes, is necessary to fulfill the foundations' potential as seedbeds of social progress. The foundations should have another decade to turn themselves into enterprising social-change agents or face a merciful death. This is a debatable proposition. For private philanthropies to nominate themselves the sponsors of broad public change raises a question of accountability: foundations cannot be voted out of office (although they can of course lose their tax exemption). Further, it seems prob-

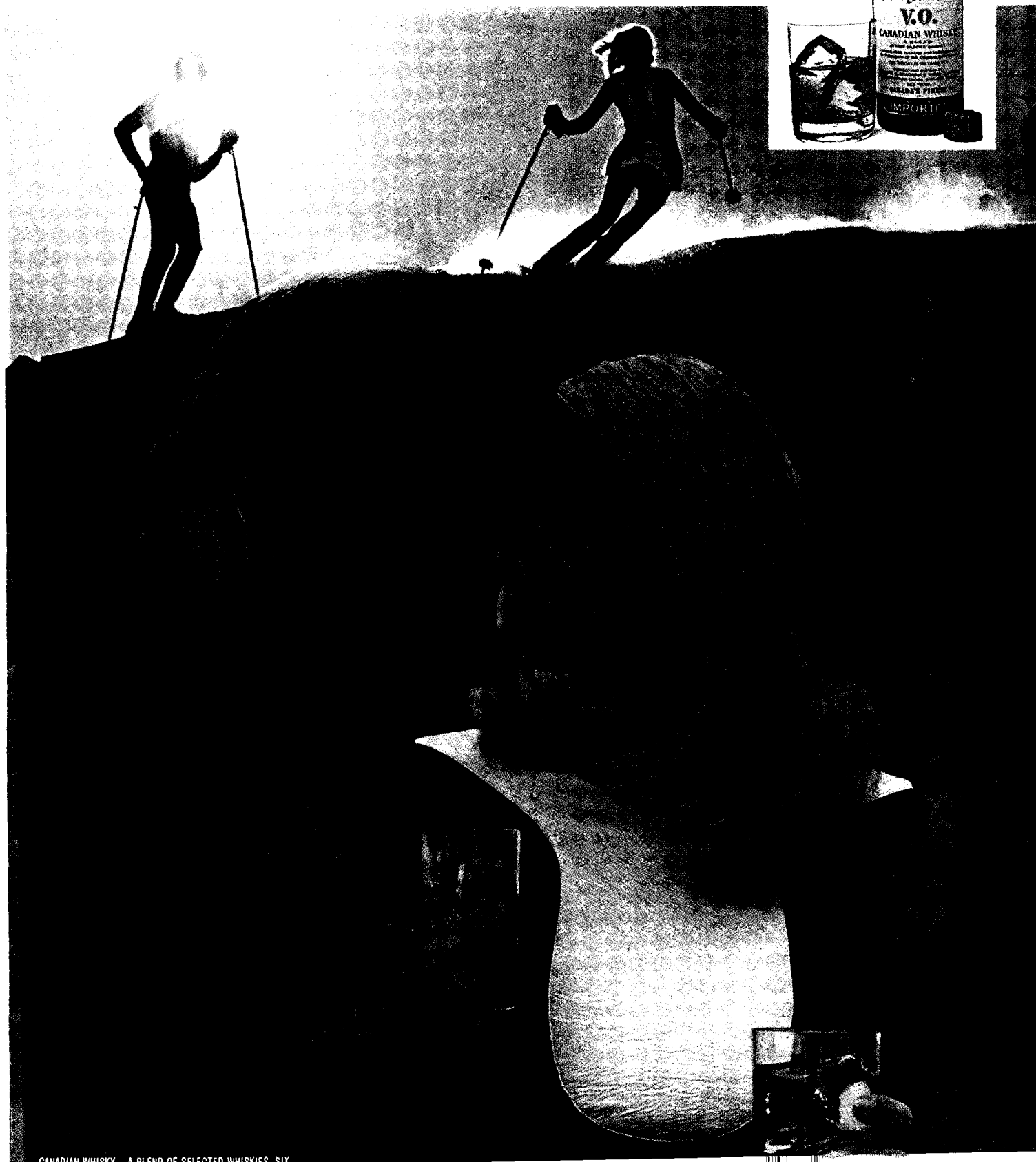
able that the amount of meaningful innovation available to a society at any given time is limited not only by the amount of money spent, but also by the state of the social sciences and intellectual tools in general—and this is an area where a half-baked loaf may well be worse than none. The wreckage of the federal social programs of the 60's shows us that money and a will to progress are not enough.

The leverage foundations have on needy institutions like universities also makes trendiness in the foundations undesirable. Hungry applicants may be forced to shape their policies to the latest fashions in giving. Worthwhile experimentation seems most likely to come from institutions and individuals with solid experience and enough financial security to insure intellectual independence. In a time when the social sciences have become a thriving industry, foundations do well, I think, to earmark part of their income for the ongoing support of institutions found on careful inspection to be consistently productive. "Venture" capital should be spent separately, and always at the direction of a staff qualified to reject what is merely fashionable.

Foundations are contributing over a billion dollars a year to American life. This sum is dwarfed by the federal budget, but is of vital importance to a host of institutions that can't hope to attract government or popular support—conservatories of music, university presses, small colleges, arcane research projects. At their most routine, the foundations shore up the broad charitable structure; and at their most inspired, they tackle jobs government can't or won't do because they are too risky or small or controversial or imaginative for the official bureaucracy. The average performance of foundations as social servants is probably as good as that of government. In a society that values pluralism, we need the alternative offered by genuinely independent sources of money and ideas. Hoping to head off the Brave New World, humanitarians and reformers of every stripe, like Huxley's people, still call their deity by the name of Ford.

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